PENGUIN HANDBOOKS

Grow Up – and Live

EUSTACE CHESSER

This book will help girls and boys to face some of the social, ethical, and physical problems of growing up

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book has been written to help boys and girls to accommodate themselves to the world in which they are growing up. It deals clearly, coolly and sympathetically with such problems as friendship, sex, the clash between personal and social motives, the need for something more than a material view of life, attitudes to parents, teachers, and plans for the future. It will go far to lessen the bewilderment of young people as they leave behind the acquiescent spirit of childhood and pass, with minds full of enquiry, into the bustling pressure of the grown-up world. The curious mind of the adolescent will be prompted by this wise book to ask the right questions. Parents, teachers, and social workers will welcome *Grow Up – and Live* for the guidance it offers in finding effective approaches to young minds.

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EUSTACE CHESSER

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EUSTACE CHESSER

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FOREWORD

I respond to an invitation to write a short foreword to *Grow Up – and Live.* One of the features of the modern world in which we are all growing up is an ever-widening quest for exact knowledge. Each individual is seeking to be self-sufficient. We are told that a modern democracy cannot hope to be successful without a dissemination of knowledge. This book deals with the self-government of a human being in a courageous and original manner. The first warning to the reader must be that, on the subject with which the author deals, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. It has taken the author a life's experience to simplify the issue which he treats. If this book serves to introduce a proper modesty into the mind of the reader and encourage him or her to enlarge experience, then it will have served a useful purpose.

In dealing with some problems of the adolescent, I think it well to remember that the moral approach is about ten times as important as the matter-of-fact. The author does a service in dismissing what are loosely known as 'inhibitions' about a variety of subjects, but it should not be forgotten that an 'old-fashioned' (so-called) moral approach to these problems must accompany the practical and sensible line in the handling of which the author excels.

The book has an important part to play in the new approach that is being made in schools and colleges to providing our children and young people with a healthy and natural upbringing. We look forward to the full operation of the Health Service and we welcome all serious attempts to use the schools against the background of the family, as places where children can learn as much as possible about life. Thus education may become a gradual and developing

process, and 'crossing the bar' into life itself may become a more normal adventure.

R. A. BUTLER

August 1947

AN INTRODUCTION

Why this book is being written

Writing a book is not so easy as many people seem to think. A born story-teller may of course find it simple to tell his tale straightforwardly, although even the few fiction writers I know tell me that they often find great difficulty in discovering just the right word which will help them convey to the reader the picture in their own minds.

A non-fiction book can sometimes be harder to write, so in case you should wonder why I, a doctor, have set out to write this one, I should like first of all to give you some of the reasons.

There are personal reasons, of course. Anyone who writes does so partly because the act of setting down his thoughts in words helps to make those thoughts clearer to himself. To work out a problem in words often means that the problem ceases to worry the writer.

A book may have material advantage for its author, and it may make him new friends. As far as I am concerned, a stronger motive is probably that I like hearing myself talk, as perhaps you do too. Writing can be fun, if you feel that you have something to say which others may like to share.

That brings me to my choice of this particular subject for a book. If I have got to talk, or write, it is surely best that my doing so should be not only a fulfilment to me but also if possible in some way a benefit to others – and not just a bore. Story-telling for entertainment is not my line, either. There are far too many masters of that craft, whom you will have met in your reading, for me to try to enter into competition there.

As I will explain in a moment, my daily work has brought

me into contact with a great many unhappy people. When I have explored the causes of their unhappiness and failure to live contentedly in the world, I have generally found that it was because they did not in youth have any really comprehensive guidance in the art of living.

A great many of these unhappy people are themselves parents, doomed even against their own best intentions to pass on to their children, often without knowing it, their own lack of inner harmony. Sometimes their own unhappiness had grown in the beginning from the mistakes of their own parents before them, and been passed on in just the same way.

In trying to help these unhappy people, I have always thought how much easier the task would have been – and how much more effective the treatment – if I could have seen them together with their parents, say twenty years ago. It might have been possible then to give the young people the seed of the knowledge they needed, and to have improved the soil in which it must grow by helping the parents.

For although usually parents have their children's good at heart and can sometimes see further than they by reason of longer experience in the world, yet where parents have lagged behind modern knowledge and thought, that can cause real misunderstanding and a great deal of unhappiness.

When trying to sort out the mistakes and errors of those who have made a mess of their lives, it is usually not possible to see their parents. In any case by that time it is generally too late to do anything there.

So my chief object in writing this book is to try to prevent much future unhappiness by giving those young people who want it the 'seeds' of knowledge of life. The 'soil' that I cannot touch may then still be affected, for just as parents influence and react on the characters and ways of their children, so children in their turn can influence and react on the characters and ways of their parents.

Being a parent should in fact be a 'growing thing', helping a man or woman to develop yet further as a person. So do not get the idea that your parents are 'finished' or 'made', any more than you are!

I do not know of any book which sets out to serve as a practical all-round guide to young people setting out on life. There have been books which have served as 'digests' of various kinds of knowledge. There are books on careers, social behaviour, 'how to get on with people', and a number of easily understandable text-books on sex.

Such books have their purpose and can be very useful, but although this volume takes the form of a book it is not intended in any way as a text-book. If it merely gives a lot of facts in the old text-book style, then so far as I am concerned it is a failure.

Some facts will be necessary, of course, and I shall try to put them in an interesting and not too complicated way; but on the whole what I want to do is to get near the young reader, not as a teacher but as a friend, talking things out – things which certainly worried me when I was younger, and which may worry you now.

I would rather feel I have given some real help to even a few of you in this way, than have prepared a fine text-book of scientific knowledge which, while it might give your brains alone something to work on, would fail to touch the really essential *you* which is starting out now on life.

This will not be a series of *Do's* and *Don't's* either, even when it comes to things I feel very strongly about. My opinion, like that of every grown person, is the result of upbringing, modified by experience. Of the two, I am pretty sure that experience has gained the ruling hand, since it has caused me to throw overboard many ideas I once held.

I do not expect you always to agree with me on matters of opinion – indeed, it would be very remarkable if you did, considering the strong probable difference in the lives

we have led. I do ask you, however, where my opinion is the result of definite experience, to consider it carefully, in case you should ever get into a situation where it may prove helpful.

Perhaps it is very ambitious in me to try to combine into one volume a series of notes on the various subjects likely to interest the young person in the teens. But anything worth while is often ambitious, and it is better to try and fail than not to have tried at all.

It is in order to try to give you some help – which you can take or leave as you like – in living your life, that I have set out to write this book.

In setting out on an unknown sea, it is better to have the seas roughly charted than not charted at all.

EUSTACE CHESSER

CHAPTER I

Something about the writer: Childhood home and school; the little sins we all share; my life as husband, father and doctor – *Something about the reader:* unusual childhood conditions; life as a lucky dip; book-learning not all-important; keeping a balance between mind and body – *The world in which we live:* Varying conditions of life; 'good' and 'bad' homes; developing a broad outlook – *Over to you again:* Overcoming your disadvantages; true and false success; happiness, romance and adventure; should you respect the conventions?

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Something about the writer

You will probably think it owing to you to know something of my qualifications to help you.

As a child, I lived a very ordinary home life with my parents in Edinburgh. Sometimes it seemed extraordinary to me then. Out of the different points of view of the two generations misunderstandings often arose. I can also remember violent quarrels with my brother and sister, as well as the happier times.

There were occasions when I felt aggrieved against my parents, even murderous towards them, with a strong resentment of parental control. At other times of course I was only too glad of their help and the safety of home.

I hated school, and to this day have a strong bias against it – so much so that it was quite a shock to me when my own son told me that he liked his.

You will understand of course that my feelings against school are not necessarily based on fact, but on my emotional reaction to my own schooldays. That is one way our

opinions get formed, and we should generally be on our guard not to let our own feelings prejudice us. Still, I am not one of those who say that the happiest days of my life were my schooldays. Actually I think *they* have been the last ten years, when through the hard way I have gained a degree of tolerance and understanding, and readiness to accept people as they are rather than as I want them to be.

On two occasions I ran away from home, and can remember well the time when I had to go back cap-in-hand and ask to be taken in again – so even so early I tasted failure and humiliation.

I should tell you too that in childhood and youth I did all the small wrong things that used to be thought too dreadful for words. Lying, petty stealing, being curious about other people's bodies and experimenting with my own – do not feel that you are alone in your wickedness, or condemned to eternal damnation if you have done them. As I shall explain later, these actions – or at any rate certain types of them – are quite natural phases of growth.

What I would like to emphasize here, however, so far as I am concerned, is that although I have done those things I have long since outgrown them. I should not do them to-day. If I did, it would mean that my development had stood still instead of going on.

A similar weakness, and one again by which everyone is beset, I can remember very plainly – the impulse to shout and resent very much more when somebody said something true, which I knew was true but did not want to hear, than when they said something quite wrong.

I have known extreme poverty, sometimes through circumstances but mainly through my own stupid follies and extravagances. Through a combination of hard work and good fortune I have come to know what to a great many people would be riches, but have taken care not to forget that thousands of others are not so lucky.

I am married, and have gone through all that marriage means. Never, even with the best possible partner, can it be only a bed of roses. There have been turbulent times and marvellous times, as there are bound to be when two human beings decide to make a life together.

We have a boy and a girl, and here again the fact that we are human beings means that we have our ups and downs. Sometimes, I must admit, I have the most tremendous rows with them – but under it all there is an understanding and readiness between us to accept each other as we are. Home life with them has taught me a great deal.

I am a doctor, experienced in the various branches of treatment of both bodily and mental sickness. Through my work I have met a great many more people than I can even remember all at one time. From them, too, I have learned a great deal – quite as much as and probably more than any of them can have learned from me.

I have learned from them, chiefly, how well intentioned most people are in the main, but what a mess a lot of them make of their lives through drifting along without any plan of action, and just letting things happen without doing very much about it.

It was this which set me thinking of the possibility of such a book as I have now set out to write. I remember so vividly my own past experiences, childhood days and youth, and have so often spoken to Youth Groups whose questions reminded me of my own early problems, that it seemed to me I might be able to help.

Especially in that part of my work which deals with people's minds and emotions, I have discovered that help is most effective when given not only to one individual, but to the group – married couple or family – whose lives together react on each other. To help the parent and forget the child, or vice versa, halves the chances of success.

Human problems should be tackled 'in the round', and

since I have already written a number of books intended to help adults, many of whom have already got their lives in a mess, it seems to me a natural step to try now to help youth.

Something about the reader

You, for whom this book is intended, have had the latter part of your childhood disturbed by the war. In one sense you are luckier than your older brothers and sisters in that – God willing – you will be able to spend the important years of adolescence and youth in a country at peace.

There are exciting things before you as life gets back to normal. Good things lie ahead, pleasures and joys which it is right you should have the opportunity to gain and make the most of when you have won them.

There are exciting serious things, too – meeting other people and learning how to get along with them; going to work, and making a success of it. In time, boy or girl, you will have a home of your own and perhaps children. According to your present age that may seem rather far away at the moment – or perhaps not so far.

There are other things ahead of you, too, not so good. Disappointments and heartaches, and perhaps pain. You may already know what that means. Indeed, the disappointments and heartaches of childhood and early youth can be among the most bitter – usually because the child, being the centre of its own world, does not realize that it is not alone in its sorrow and that millions of others have already felt the same way and will do so again.

Life is like a Lucky Dip. You never know quite what you are going to get out of it. Disasters can happen unexpectedly, and it would be silly to pretend that they do not. But on the whole I think it is true to say that if you have a reasonable aim and stick to it, you can be pretty sure you will get there;

and if you do not let other people down, then generally – though there will certainly be some disappointments – your friends will be the kind of people who will not let you down.

Of course, one trouble with young people is that because the chief emphasis in their life so far has been on forced book-learning and examination-passing, they are inclined to overestimate its importance. It is natural that you should do so. After ten years or so of school, you have got accustomed to thinking in terms of book-learning.

While a good all-round knowledge of bookish subjects is an excellent thing to have, it is not the only thing that goes to make a complete man or woman. The really difficult thing about passing from the teens into the twenties is finding a balance between the rather narrow world of home and school, the big world beyond – and the possibly even bigger world, from your point of view, within you.

There are excellent people, of steadfast character and fine natural gifts in their own line of work, but with little scholastic education. During the war, when labour was scarce, it was often necessary to give quite important jobs to people with lower academic qualifications than usual. Where they were picked for their good common sense and understanding they did very well indeed.

There are some scholars who spend their whole lives pent within rooms full of books, and never really come to understand how other people think and feel, or get a picture of the world as a whole. While such people can be and often are very great, they are usually great only within their own specialized subject, and if you wanted help or advice on human relationships they would be about the last people to go to.

If you want to live in either of these ways and have the opportunity to do so, there is nothing to stop you; but in my opinion the greatest satisfaction is gained from a life lived *to the full* – that is to say, with every faculty of body

and mind exercised and developed, running healthily and smoothly.

Mens sana in corpore sano means 'healthy mind in healthy body' and has been held up as the ideal way to live. It must mean very much more than appears at first sight if it is really to be valid.

The mind should be cultivated and the body kept healthy. In addition, the human understanding of life should be developed.

So it seems to me that, as in all things, the 'happy medium' here is the best. That is a phrase, I know, that many young people hate, because they are inclined on the whole to divide everything into 'black' or 'white', 'good' or 'bad'.

Life is far too complicated, and so are people, for such classifications to last long. In this case, we can see that scholastic knowledge at the expense of 'living' knowledge tends to produce a person without balance. Too much 'living' knowledge and too little scholastic knowledge does the same.

Of course, in order to get on in the basic task of making a living, it may be necessary for you to specialize. It is then up to you not to lose sight of wider horizons. The bank manager and the civil servant who go off at the week-end to golf or tennis are, perhaps without realizing it, balancing out the long days spent shut up in the office – and that is a very healthy thing to do.

I think one should go still further, and where work means existing in a small, confined circle, exercise the 'human understanding' as well by taking steps to meet people of quite different ways of life, habits and ideas.

The world in which we live

Of course, we do not live in a vacuum. Our bodies depend a great deal for their health and well-being upon the

surroundings in which we live. These conditions vary very much, not only from country to country, but also from place to place in any one country.

If you were born and brought up in an overcrowded, not very clean part of a great city, the chances are that your body will have suffered by lack of fresh air and sunlight. Thousands of children, in this civilized country, still do not get enough of the right foods to eat. Through no fault of their own they grow up ill and weak, more likely to fall a prey to disease than those who have good clean comfortable homes.

Nor are disease and similar afflictions the worst handicaps that can follow bad living conditions or bad upbringing. Our minds and hearts, quite as much as our bodies, are affected by the conditions in which we grow up.

No one is going to find it very easy to do homework if the whole family lives in one or two rooms – as many families do to-day. It is difficult for the child of a home beset by continual quarrels, or money worries, to escape being injured in its outlook on life.

Too much or too little religious or moral training can give equally harmful results – turning out narrow-minded people incapable of hearing other ideas than their own, or others who think the whole world was made for their benefit and ignore the well-being of their neighbours.

Physical handicaps are more easily overcome than these. Disease can be cured, but psychological scarring can be permanent, since only the will of the individual can help to cure it – and people whose minds and hearts have been warped in this way usually do not know what is wrong with them and why they cannot get along smoothly.

It is such injury in early life which makes people later go to extremes of behaviour. They may take to extremist political views, steal, cheat and betray their friends, become artists or saints. According to the nature of their reaction

through their basic character, they will go to one extreme or another, good or bad.

Some people have tried to argue that the great achievements of men and women who have been handicapped in the beginning are some justification for bad conditions which seem to have acted as a spur, but on the whole I do not think this can be upheld. People just as creative and useful have come from good conditions too, and the drawback of the extremists is that although they have often made great contributions to mankind through their work, they have seldom been well-balanced characters.

So far I have dealt with the effects of the undesirable home. If you are one of the lucky ones, and either in a material or a spiritual sense, or both, were born into favourable circumstances, you may be liable to another pitfall which for your own sake as well as everyone else's it would be well to avoid.

Try to be tolerant and understanding of those who have not had your advantages. You should count yourself fortunate, not be priggish and superior at having been given a good start.

After all, the fact that you have that good start implies some responsibility to give a helping hand when you can to those who are handicapped. An 'upstage-and-county' attitude will only create a barrier between you and them, from which your development will suffer quite as much as theirs, robbing you of opportunity to gain a complete knowledge of humanity in all its aspects.

In addition to the individual circumstances which help to form character, there are also of course the broad trends of events which affect us all – political events, general food shortage, war, and epidemics caused through neglect and public ignorance.

Over to you again

So already in childhood you may have been handicapped in one or other of the various ways which influence our development as human beings.

Fortunately, however, such handicaps need not ordinarily stamp us with a mark which cannot be rubbed out. It is in the power of most of us to modify the effects of bad conditions if we really care to do so.

We should try to take ourselves in hand – especially while we are still young – where we realize that our bodies, minds or hearts (I am using that last word rather loosely to express our 'spirits', 'characters' or 'selves') have been badly influenced in the past.

As I shall explain more fully later – in connexion with Heredity, which is one of the things which helps to make us what we are – there are some people who are too badly handicapped from birth by inherited disease of body or mind to be able to help themselves in this way. These are the exceptions, from whom too much cannot be expected, though some of them have put out mighty efforts which put most of us to shame.

There are the blind, who train themselves to get about in the most wonderful way. Some of them not only learn how to read through the system of embossed symbols called Braille, but even take the most advanced courses in higher education and enter the professions.

There are the deformed, who with patience and courage learn how to develop faculties to replace those they have lost. From time to time one reads in the papers of people without hands who have learned how to write with their feet.

You have probably already heard of Helen Keller, blind

and deaf as the result of an accident at the age of twenty-one months. With the help of a patient friend and her own magnificent will, Miss Keller succeeded in overcoming the terrible difficulties which seemed certain to prevent her ever living a happy and useful life. To-day, in her sixties, she is a highly cultured woman and an authoress in her own right.

Bad enough to get through your education with all your faculties, let alone with so terrible a disadvantage!

On the whole, however, if we have no handicap so terrible as to disqualify us at the start, it is up to us what we make of our lives.

It is true that some people, owing to the way the world is run, have immense opportunities through wealth, while others have to struggle along from hand to mouth. If you are among the latter things will not be easy, but with determination and courage you should win through.

Do not think this is a pep-talk on the 'newspaper-boy-to-millionaire' lines. I do not think desire for enormous disproportionate wealth is a reasonable or desirable aim. A man may acquire great wealth through hard work, self-denial or good luck, even if he was born poor, and still not have lived a happy or really full life.

In fact, I would go further, and say that if a man has found it necessary to go on driving himself to that extent after gaining reasonable security, that in itself is a sign that all is not well with him as a human being.

He is in fact proclaiming to the world that the inner contentment has eluded him, so that he has to seek greater and greater wealth and power as a compensation. Hard driving work when it is no longer necessary, without proper enjoyment of leisure, is also a sign of the desire to put out of mind the feeling of discontent.

The practical and reasonable aim is surely to have developed all of yourself – not just the bookish mind or the

athletic body, or the business faculty of 'getting on'. All these are important, *in their place*, though in my opinion the most important of all is something else: being a real human being.

Nor are 'happiness' or 'romance' or even 'adventure' the things to go out after, because none of them is solid enough to build a whole life on. They will come in their time unsought, if you take care to *be yourself* completely, not the heroine of a film or the hero of a book.

If you take only a part of yourself and build it up into an imaginary 'big' figure, you will never really be yourself at all. The 'total personality' – the real *you* – is expressed only by being yourself. Its highest development is found by expression on 'social' lines – selfish impulses being curbed by consideration for others.

How often do you hear it said of someone, 'She's so nice. So natural. So unaffected.' Even a poor self, if it is real, is better than an artificial one, although the latter seems to you more imposing.

A first-hand Mary Jones or Michael Smith is of much more real value than a second-hand Betty Grable or D'Artagnan. Granted Mary Jones or Michael Smith may not amount to very much at the moment, with care and self-discipline they may amount to a very great deal in the future. But the second-hand personality can never, at any time in the future, be any more than just that.

Happiness, romance, adventure and success will come to you incidentally, as by-products of your life as a human being, according to your natural faculties *and* what you make of them.

You can spoil your natural gifts through faults of character, too much or too little confidence, pride or greed, or wearing an unnecessary cloak cut according to the current convention.

There are two sorts of conventions, as I shall explain

later: those founded on fact, which are worth respecting, since otherwise you are the one who gets hurt; and those which are just a matter of silly fashion, which a real individual will disregard. Conventions which encourage you to make out that you are a different person from what you really are are silly, and I do not see why one should be bothered with them at all.

The alternative to these mistakes, for which if you make them you yourself will be the chief sufferer, is to make the most of what natural gifts you have and find contentment through understanding of yourself and other people.

CHAPTER II

Life around and within you: Growing-up in the world; are older people 'finished'?; life and continual adaptation – *How our world came into being:* At the beginning of time; the birth of the world – *Seasons and climate:* How water was formed; how rain is made; the bases of climate

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Life around and within you

When a child is born, he is only aware of his own being. Things outside him seem as if in fact they were part of himself. He does not appreciate the difference between Self and Not-Self.

He quickly learns, if his bodily needs are not attended to, that there are things outside himself which can help or hurt him. That is the beginning of a long process of adjustment to the world in which we live – a process which continues throughout life.

The whole point of growing-up is in learning to make this distinction between What-Is-You and What-Is-Not-You, and then reaching a happy balance between them.

The Philosophers – men who spend their lives trying to think out the problems of Life, Death and Eternity – go even further. They argue that growing-up *in spirit* is not complete until it has come full circle – until the individual has learned to identify himself once more with the ALL of life around and beyond him.

This time, however, the approach should be different. For the infant, everything is part of self. For the truly adult – that is, fully-developed – human being, self is part of everything.

These greater problems we will leave for the moment, though later we shall return to them. Meanwhile it should be clearly understood that the growing-up process is a continuous one. Do not fall into the error of thinking that older people than yourself are set into a mould, like jellies, and are not changing and learning any more.

Of course, I must admit that sometimes that does happen, but it is rare, and where it does occur, a great pity. Most people go on and on learning and adjusting themselves throughout life.

This applies just as much to your mother and father as it does to you. You are probably having to make your own personal adjustments to life more quickly than they do, because during the period of transition from school to work you are meeting a rapid succession of altered circumstances.

On the other hand, your parents too are always having to adapt themselves to new conditions. Have you ever stopped to think how strange for them must have been the change over from being a 'young married couple' to becoming 'mother and father'?

No wonder they sometimes got frightened by the strangeness and responsibility and made mistakes! For they too have had much to learn, and have made their mistakes in learning.

You have the advantage of them in that, being younger, you are naturally more easily adaptable and pliable in mind and body. They have the advantage of you in that, having longer experience of life behind them, they have learned to accept the facts of existence as they are and to adapt themselves *more* than naturally – that is to say, by recognizing necessity.

These things should help you to understand each other better – for I know how very often there is conflict between parents and children, conflict which could be softened if a better attempt at understanding were made *from both sides.*

Another thing which helps us to understand not only our parents but everyone with whom we come in contact, is a clear insight into *who* and *what* we are. To reach that, it is desirable to know something of how we came into being and of all the forces which have combined to produce each of us.

People do not just happen.

I do not mean by that merely that their bodies come into existence – as in all forms of life – as new young plants developed from the seeds of their father and mother. There is much more to it than just that.

Why have you certain likenesses with your parents – not only in looks and physical constitution, but probably also in character as well?

Yet why, on the other hand, are you also quite a new person in your own right, not just a simple mixture of father and mother?

To be able to answer these questions, and also to get a reasonable picture of the part each of us has to play in the scheme of things, it is necessary to go back a very long way, and examine how life has developed during the known history of the world.

Since this book is not a text-book, it will be possible to give only in the most general terms a review of the history of life.

If you wish to study the various points more fully, you will be able to get from your public library many interesting books on the two subjects which give us most clues as to the origin of life.

These are GEOLOGY (the science which tells us the history of the material world, through information gained from study of the soil, rocks and metals) and BIOLOGY (the science whose research workers investigate the origins and behaviour of every kind of living thing).

Some of you will already know as much as and probably

more than I can tell you here. If you are one of these, you must be patient for a few pages. It would not be fair to leave out on your account things which other young people who have not studied these particular subjects may not know.

How our world came into being

The history of the world has been traced back through the study of Geology (in association with ASTRONOMY, the study of the stars, planets, suns and moons of our universe).

It is believed that at some remotely distant time, measured in millions of millions of years, an upheaval occurred in the heavens. This was probably a near-collision between our sun and a large star.

I say a 'near-collision', because if two such large balls of energy passed even relatively close together, the result would be that pieces would be wrenched from them – by force similar to that which attracts a pin to a magnet, but of course much stronger and actually rather different in kind.

In this way the planets came into being, as separate fiery particles, held by that same attraction to follow a set course round the sun. Of these our world is one.

It was at first a mass of blazing gases. As these cooled, the molten metals began to solidify and to sink down into the centre of the earth. A solid crust formed over the surface.

You probably know that when things are heated they swell in size, even though in most cases this expansion is beyond detection by the naked eye. Conversely, things as they cool shrink.

This fact is recognized in many ways in daily life. For instance, railway lines are never laid in solid, unbroken stretches. If they were, the heat of the sun would cause the rails to swell and buckle, with disastrous consequences.

The rails are laid with small 'breaks' between them at regular intervals, to allow for the expansion.

So it follows that as the core of the earth cooled, it shrank. What, then, was going to happen to the solid crust all round it?

We can guess best by thinking of a balloon, with a definite amount of air in it. What would happen if the air inside that balloon shrank? Or, say, for the sake of our argument, if we let out some of the air – which comes to the same thing?

The surface of the earth, in shrinking to accommodate its shrunken core, became wrinkled – just as our balloon would become wrinkled if the amount of its contents became smaller.

The top-ridges of the wrinkles became mountains and hills. The little depressions between them, of course, formed the valleys and plains.

Over the many, many ages which have passed since then, this process of cooling and shrinkage has gone on, always so slowly that in the little span of one hundred years it would not have been noticed.

This has, however, caused from time to time greater or lesser earthquakes, which have altered the positions of mountains and valleys, sometimes sinking whole continents under the sea, and sometimes bringing new ones up.

We know, for instance, that there have been distinct periods of time when our own island has been submerged. The deposits of chalk (the compressed fossilized remains of millions of little water-creatures) in our soil tell us that.

Legends of lost continents like Atlantis, and perhaps even the Bible story of the Flood, may come from dim memories of such happenings in the early days of the earth.

At the present time, expeditions are being prepared to seek in the Antarctic submerged continents which are believed once to have been located in the Indian Ocean, but

to have drifted south under water after breaking away from the original land mass of which they were part.

It is a grim thought that the impulse behind these expeditions is to find the rare and precious metals needed for atomic research. The folly of modern man – unless *you* take the matter in hand later on – is such that atomic science is at the moment more likely to be a scourge to the world than the tremendous benefit which, rightly used, it could be.

The fact that the earth still has a fiery core is shown by occasional eruptions of volcanoes. You will probably have heard of Etna, Stromboli, and Vesuvius, or read of the 'last days of Pompeii', the great city totally destroyed in one such long-ago disaster.

Earthquakes do still take place, though it is only in the tropics that they happen on a large scale. Even in temperate climates like our own they happen quite often, but on a scale so small that they are not generally noticed except in being recorded on a very delicate special instrument called a 'seismograph'.

The earth is solid for such a long way down that it is unlikely that any sudden large-scale upheaval will now take place. But slow adjustments of the interior and surface are always going on.

The whole life of the earth is a continuous process of adjustment and adaptation from within and without. So are our own lives. Even in this most basic way we are one with the life of the earth, in whose existence and history each of us has the part of one little cell.

Seasons and climate

The time taken by our earth to move round the sun is 365¼ days. The varying distance of the earth from the sun at the different stages of its course causes the succession of our

seasons. These make up the *year* – 365 days, with one day added to every fourth year to make up that extra quarter.

The time taken by the earth to spin on its own axis is twenty-four hours, and, according to which side of its surface is presented to the sun, it is day or night in that half of the world.

These changes of position in relation to the sun keep going the processes which make climate. Climate could not exist as we know it but for one most precious element – water.

Though it certainly does not look like it, water is a chemical combination of two gases, oxygen and hydrogen – two parts of hydrogen to one of oxygen. In the original upheaval which gave birth to our world, large quantities of hydrogen and ogygen met and combined, giving rise to the first rivers and seas.

You know how a pool dries up in summer. Sometimes, in the country, you will see the whole bed of a stream,quite dry. This is not only because no more water is running down from the hills, but also because the sun has dried up the water in the pool.

Have you ever wondered what happened to the water in the pool or the stream-bed? It has 'dried up', you say. Yes, but where to?

It has been absorbed into the warm air, through the action of the sun – that immensely hot 'central heating system' of the world. But if the water dried up and never came back again, the whole world would be even drier than the Sahara. Nothing could live. There could not even be any succession of the seasons as we know them – only ghastly heat and terrible dry cold.

But just as the steam which rises from your bath condenses on the bathroom wall – that is, forms little drops when it is cooled by contact with the colder wall – so does the water drawn into the air by the sun condense, first into clouds, and finally, when cooled still more, into rain.

In fact, showers often begin on mountainsides – where the mountain acts like the bathroom wall – and a country like Ireland, first land after hundreds of miles of Atlantic ocean, is bound to be wet, because over it breaks the first force of the rain-filled clouds the winds have driven across to its shores.

So in the very beginning was started the cycle which ensures that our rivers and seas are always fed by new rain, and themselves feed the clouds again. And as you will see if you think about it, unless that had happened, life on earth could never have come into being or been able to support itself when it did.

CHAPTER III

How life came into being: A mystery story; the conditions necessary for life; will man ever create life? – *The humblest form of life:* The common ancestor of all creatures; what shall we believe? – *The first step in development:* Nature discovers 'community' life; mutual help better than competition; what can we learn from Nature – *From sea to land:* The tadpole and the frog; the human child in the womb; changes past and to come – *Further stages of development:* Lungs and limbs; the will to development – *Life on land:* All life related to each other; man's place in the 'tree' of life

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How life came into being

Now we come to a happening which the mind of man has not yet been able to explain satisfactorily. Somewhere, all those millions of years ago, there appeared on the vast empty waste of seas the speck of a living thing.

Why not on land? you may ask.

We believe that life must have begun in the water because without fluid no living cell, plant or animal, can exist. Water must have played a most important part in creating the conditions in which it was possible for life to come about. Water also offers greater possibilities of movement towards food and away from danger for a simple form of being.

Another thing which has been discovered to be essential to life is warmth. Some people believe that the greater warmth of the world in those remote times enabled enormously complicated chemical processes to take place, which made it possible for life to arise from non-living matter.

If that is so, it would seem that those conditions are extraordinarily difficult to re-create. Scientists have for many years been trying to manufacture the same conditions and bring about the same result artificially.

They have done many clever things. They can take an organ from a dead creature and keep it alive in the laboratory by giving it continuous care and attention. They can bring about changes in the physical bodies of plants and animals. But so far they have not succeeded in creating life – not even in its simplest form.

Perhaps they may succeed some day. I do not know.

We can only give the name of God to the Force or Will which first caused the difference between non-living things like rocks and gases, and the life of the first tiny living cell which appeared in the waters – and which was to give rise to every form of plant and animal life in the world to-day.

The humblest form of life

An example of the original form of life – the single living cell – can be found in the nearest ditch and examined if you have a strong enough microscope. It is the amoeba.

I have called it the 'humblest' form of life, but perhaps that is wrong. It has some claims to be the 'proudest' form of life, since from that brave beginning everything else that lives has come.

Let us be clear first of all what we mean by a 'cell'.

A cell is the smallest unit of living matter which can live alone – although it often does not.

It is to the living tissue very much what the atom is to matter – the smallest subdivision which can exist by itself. (Do not get fogged by this comparison, which is meant only as an illustration to help you understand. Cells are composed of atoms, too, in the last analysis.)

In just the same way that the atom itself can be divided, so can the cell be divided. When that is done, the cell is seen to be made up of a central nucleus with fluid and semi-solid particles round it.

All living matter – including your own body – is made up of cells. Most creatures, even the tiniest, are composed of millions of cells. The creatures which consist of one cell only cannot be seen except with an immensely powerful microscope. The amoeba, which exists in huge quantities in unrefined water, is one such creature.

It moves rather like you would if you had no arms and legs, pushing itself forward through the water away from harmful influences and towards food. It exists for itself alone – just as you did when you were first born – without regard to the Not-Self around it. So long as it is in that 'frame of mind', it cannot develop into anything higher.

This little single cell is on its own account a chemical factory – tiny, but efficient, and, for the narrow purposes of its life, complete in itself. It absorbs nourishment from the water round it, and uses that nourishment – through the work of its nucleus and particles – to maintain itself. It has power of movement, digestion and growth.

It also reproduces itself, which it does by dividing in two. Just as a raindrop which falls down the window-pane divides itself into two exactly similar raindrops, so when the amoeba divides the result is two exactly similar single cells of life.

That, at any rate, is what some scientists tell us. But before going any further, I should like to make a comment.

Although we know a great deal about life and its origins, the amount we know chiefly serves to show us how little we do know in fact. New discoveries may at any time upset some of our most cherished theories.

So do not take what I tell you here, which has the extra disadvantage of being very much simplified for the sake of

clearness and shortness, as literal 'gospel' truth not a comma of which can be wrong.

I can only give you a summary of the knowledge we have at the moment, and say, 'This is what we believe to have happened. The evidence points this way.' It may well be, if you are interested in these things, that in later life you may be the one to make some revolutionary discovery which will overturn existing theories.

Absorb what you can of available knowledge, and as you grow keep your mind sufficiently elastic to be prepared – if you come up against a fact what does not fit in with past theories – to throw earlier ideas overboard.

Frankly, I myself am inclined to believe, despite what some scientists say, that even the humblest of amoeba is probably slightly unlike the next – it is only that the difference is too small for us to trace. But that purely personal view of mine, which I cannot prove, does not affect or make less valid the arguments which the biologists have built up from the existence of the amoeba.

The first step in development

The amoebae in our ditches do not develop beyond being amoebae because the conditions favouring further development no longer exist. But in the early days of the world conditions were different.

The conditions which then existed, together with other factors which we will examine, encouraged the development of units of life consisting of more than one cell.

Now it stands to reason that a number of cells combined together for their common good have a better chance to survive and live efficiently than one cell by itself. This principle you will find holds good throughout life – in marriage, in the family and in community life.

It took Nature a long time to find this out, by a process of trial and error, but gradually, over long periods of time, the more complicated cell-systems came into being.

Remember, however, that thus far each cell is a self-contained life, capable of movement, digestion, growth and reproduction. A mass of such cells, joined together, might have some advantage, but until they learnt the lesson of co-operation the mere *bigness* of the cell-system would have as many disadvantages as advantages.

The organism (that is, the living thing – in this case, one consisting of a number of cells) would be unwieldy in movement towards food, and awkward in movement away from danger. Its digestive and reproductive processes would be split up into as many parts as it had cells. In fact, it would not 'hang together' as a whole thing in any useful sense.

But the first such organism which developed co-operative system among its cells for mutual help and sharing of work would have tremendous advantages over others of its kind.

Hitherto, all the work of life had fallen on each separate cell, and could therefore be done only in a primitive way. Where a number of cells joined together to lead a 'family' life, the duties of movement, digestion, growth and reproduction could be taken over by different cells.

These 'specialists' could then give their whole attention to their particular job. In this way organic life became more complicated, but also more efficient.

Now you will see that this involves the acceptance of that very important principle of mutual help and division of work which is essential to all good living, especially in the world as it is to-day.

The actual physical conditions necessary to the development of higher life from the amoeba existed in the primitive world.

There may have been some innate 'herd instinct' which inclined the separate cells to come together to act in greater

safety – or, of course, the 'herd instinct' as we know it to-day may be an inherited memory of the good results of such coming-together.

Finally, the greater efficiency of the more complicated cell-system would keep it alive when the risks of existence killed off the single-cell unit.

All these things, combined together over great periods of time, with many a step back as well as the steps forward, resulted in the appearance of ever slightly higher and higher forms of life.

All these things, which happened so gradually so long ago, have a bearing on our way of life to-day.

In a world of teeming millions, it is not possible for each of us to live entirely to ourselves. We cannot, in the complicated life of to-day, provide all our own movement (if we want to go far), food (if we want more than vegetables from the garden), protection (both from the weather and from anti-social persons), nor can any one of us reproduce alone.

Our life is dependent upon the lives of others. We live by their work, and they by ours. That is why the adaptation of the new young individual to community life is so important.

It involves, if you like, a certain sacrifice of the personal will, but it carries with it all the advantages which come from combined effort.

Notice, also, that Nature makes no distinction between the cells which do the 'dirty' work and those which do the so-called 'higher' work. The brain cell does not put on airs by comparison with the kidney cell, which is part of the refuse system of the body!

Each is essential to the good working of the whole organism of which it is a part, and the only judgement by which it can be weighed is the degree of efficiency with which it does its work.

So we, each of us, whatever our work in life, are equally

necessary to the well-being of the whole community, and should be judged only by the degree of efficiency with which we do that work.

From sea to land

In the sea, more and more complex forms of life came into being – remember, we are still dealing with life in its primitive forms millions of years ago.

Coral insect and sponge, the sea-anemone (half vegetable, half animal), the jelly-fish – through all these forms life developed, until the coming of the fish with a bony structure as the basis of its body.

That was a great step forward, because such a fish would be stronger and more agile than its rivals, and better able to look after itself. But remember that even such a fish is still nothing more than a highly complicated system of separate cells, each with its separate life and different duty to do.

There were, however, limits to the kind of development which could go on while life existed only in the sea. On land there were new sources of nourishment and new conditions, for creatures which could manage to obtain the former and adapt themselves to the latter.

Those creatures which could move quickly, defend themselves most strongly and find food most efficiently were likely to be the best survivors in the struggle for life. Accordingly, some forms of life began to adapt themselves to living both in the water and on the land.

Many of these species have died out, though we know through finding their fossilized remains that they did exist in the remotely distant past. A few of them remain.

The one you will know best is the frog.

You have all probably watched and studied the development of the life of the individual frog: how from the spawn

comes the tadpole, which by gradual stages ceases to be only a water-creature and develops more complicated organs until at last it hops out on to land as a frog.

It is important to remember this simple instance of development, because – as will be mentioned later – what the frog does during the time of its existence as a tadpole, you yourself have already done while in your mother's womb.

The womb is the organ inside the mother in which the human seed grows until the child is sufficiently well formed and strong enough to be able to be born into the world.

While in the womb, the developing human seed passes through the various stages by which human-kind developed from lower forms of life. For a time, things like the gills which were the breathing apparatus of the fish-stage exist in the unborn child, to pass away and be replaced by lungs as the embryo (the unborn) continues its development.

Most of these changes, which mirror the development of the human race, take place before you are actually born into the world. Whereas the frog is born, as it were, half-developed physically, and has to go in its own person through the tadpole-stage – which took its ancestors many thousands of years and many generations to accomplish in the first instance.

There are certain other stages of development, mental, emotional, and – in connexion with the reproductive system – physical, through which the human being must also pass after birth.

Some of these changes may still be working in you now, and it is in order to help you through them that I am writing this book.

Further stages of development

As living things began to adapt themselves to life on land, the gills which extract oxygen from sea-water and are the breathing apparatus of the water-creature developed gradually into lungs.

This development was very necessary, since lungs have a much greater capacity for making use of oxygen, which our bodies 'burn' as 'fuel' to give us energy, in much the same way as an engine burns coke.

Limbs became necessary for movement. Whereas the first land-creatures wriggled or lurched or hopped, the *need* for special limbs brought them at last into being. That particular duty became the function of specialized cells which developed the capacity for the job. (For more detailed notes on this question, please turn to the next chapter, under the heading 'How Heredity Works'.) If you cannot quite see how this could be, perhaps a simple illustration may help.

Maybe you want to be a good boxer. There is nothing to stop you, except that your biceps are flabby and with the best will in the world you cannot at the moment put up a really good show against another boy of your own height and weight.

What do you do – if you are really keen, I mean?

You go into training, but in particular you exercise the muscles which are letting you down. You go into the gym day after day and punch away at the punch-ball until the muscles are toned up and standing out like knotted cords upon your arms.

Where did the muscle come from that now holds a power which will make you terrible to any challenger?

Did you will it into being? In a sense you did, since it was your original *will* which made you keep on trying.

Then how much more would you be capable of if life itself depended on your adapting yourself to certain new needs! That is what the original forms of life were forced to do.

But where, in fact, did that splendid muscle come from?

It is not enough to say you always had a muscle. There is obviously much more muscle there now than there was before. The reason is that by using and using and using it, you called into action the natural forces of growth and development which are at the base of all life.

That is an example of what one person can do in a very short period of time. Now let us suppose, in regard to the development of more elementary creatures, that their stimulus to effort – in place of the *will* which was yours – was *need*; need of food, protection or movement.

Although their stimulus to development is different from yours, the means to development will be the same: repeated effort.

Because their aim was so much bigger than yours, being the evolution of ever more complicated and efficient forms of life, their effort was also necessarily immensely greater. It was spread over many thousands of years and repeated by many thousands of individual creatures, until at last their achievement became 'second nature' to their descendants.

Life on land

So the procession of life has been carried on.

The reptiles, the insects, the birds, the mammals – each of these kinds of living thing is but a different branch of the tree of life from the one root. Each individual of each kind is the flower and its offspring the fruit of each branch.

So wide, so diverse are these different types of life that it seems difficult at first to realize that they are so related to each other. But study of the frames of creatures living to-day, and of the remains of others now extinct which have been unearthed all over the world, assure us that this is so.

Enormous time has been occupied in these developments – time so long that the known history of mankind as a separate species seems by contrast only very short.

That should give us hope for the future. If there is so much time and so much development behind us, why should there not be at least equal time and development ahead of us?

If we can realize that we fulfil the purpose of vital links in the chain of ever-developing life, existence has a basic meaning – a grand and an inspiring meaning.

The living 'family' – or rather the branch of the whole family of life – to which mankind belongs is the mammals. They are so-called because of the development of the mammary (breast) glands for feeding their young. Some creatures which we regard as very different from ourselves belong to the lower order of this family: lion, pig, cow, monkey, and even the kangaroo!

All life is related to us, and we are related to all life, in the physical as well as the spiritual sense.

Our nearest relations – though remember that it is still only in a very far-off sense, since we are divided from them by the enormous development of millions of years – are certain of the ape family.

To them we owe our useful organ, the hand, with its flexible thumb, developed through ages of life in the tropical forest. As we have developed beyond them we have gained the capacity to walk upright. Our arms, on the other hand, have ceased to be over-developed in relation to the rest of our bodies, and have assumed what to our eye looks like a better proportion.

We no longer need to swing by them, that is the reason!

The biggest lesson which the history of life can teach us is that the faculties we do not use wither away, while those which we do use become enormously developed.

CHAPTER IV

What is heredity?: Development advanced through offspring – *The sexual method of reproduction:* The value of sexual reproduction; Nature's early experiments; children and parents similar but different – *How heredity works:* Arguments among the biologists; how did the giraffe get his long neck? – *The passing-on of hereditary traits:* The male and female 'seeds'; good and bad fairies at the christening; why do you resemble father and mother? – *Why you are boy or girl* – *When Nature makes a mistake:* Inheritance of abnormal characteristics; learning to exercise tolerance and understanding – *Bridging the gap between past and future:* Your place in history; the argument for purposeful living

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What is Heredity?

It is plain, of course, that any living being can make only the tiniest advance in any direction during the short span of its own lifetime.

How is it, then, that the enormous advances made by the forces of Life in evolving ever higher kinds of creatures has been able to operate?

The answer is: through Heredity.

We have already noted that the most primitive manner in which organic life reproduces itself is by fission; that is, by 'splitting up'.

But this has the disadvantage of producing two beings exactly alike – or as nearly so as we can tell – and cannot therefore be made a means of advancement for the species.

The work entailed on the single cell in this manner of reproduction must also have been enormous. Therefore,

when the work of living began to be divided up among the co-operating cells, certain of them began to 'specialize' in reproduction alone.

Many and various were the experiments made by Nature before a more or less standard system of reproduction became the rule.

In general, however, the principle which came to be followed was that before reproduction could take place, it was necessary for the special reproductive cells of *two* beings to meet and mingle before the 'splitting-up' process took place.

The reason for this is easy to see.

The sexual method of reproduction

If two beings, each with rather different constitution, individually contribute something to the formation of an offspring, then the offspring will be different again from both parents although in many respects like them.

If you imagine this process of 'pairing-off' going on for generation after generation, you will see that the offspring of each pairing will be different and different again. In fact, nowadays, with wide choice of partner, there are almost infinite possibilities for what your own children will be like, according to what partner you choose.

But before things got so far, Nature experimented with different ways of reproduction.

There have been creatures two-sexed in themselves and able to fertilize themselves. There have been creatures that change their sex at different periods of their lives, of which the oyster remains as one example. Within each subdivision, there have been a number of variations in habits and methods of reproduction.

The great usefulness of the 'sexual' method of reproduction – that is, the way which requires two different parents

– is in the greater variety of offspring obtained, and the chances for the offspring to carry on the best features of their parents.

If human beings reproduced like the amoeba, you would simply be a more or less exact copy of your mother in all respects. Everyone would be much the same. That would be very dull, and it would also mean that there could be very little further development of the human race.

You know quite well by now, from your own experience, that, however much you may share certain characteristics of father and mother, you are a quite separate individual with a life and character of your own.

For that, you can thank the 'sexual' method of reproduction, which has gathered together different 'bits' of the characteristics of two different lines of ancestors, and combined them in you.

Clever fathers and mothers know this, and allow for it in their dealings with their children – just as clever children recognize that their parents' greater experience of life can be made useful to themselves as a guide in difficulty.

But parents who cannot realize that their children are *not* just themselves 'over again' often run into a great deal of trouble which, with a wider outlook, could have been avoided.

You will notice, then, how naturally and usefully what we call 'sex' has developed throughout the ages. Yet more nonsense is talked about it than about any other part of our life.

Male and female are not a superior and an inferior form of life. They are two different and *complementary* forms of life – that is, each completes the other, and is needed by the other for completion.

They are specially made so that for the purpose of reproduction the special cells of the female must be fertilized by the special cells of the male.

In this connexion, it is surprising how often children

brought up in towns do not realize the significance of that word 'fertilized'. The ordinary hen's egg, for example, will never hatch into a chick unless the egg-seed inside the hen has been in contact before the egg is laid with the special seed of the cock.

Country children will probably think it funny that there can be anyone who does not know that, because they know it by the natural experiences of country life, but it is just this kind of source of knowledge from which most town children are more or less cut off.

How Heredity works

There is some argument among biologists as to the exact way in which development changes are handed down through the generations.

Most biologists hold that habits which have been acquired by individuals cannot be passed on by heredity. They say that before such a thing could happen, some change must have taken place in the make-up of the 'seed' itself which is to grow into the offspring.

There is another group of biologists who argue that – if a sufficient number of generations of individuals have followed certain habits – the necessary change will take place in the 'seed' to enable that habit to become 'natural' to the later offspring of that species.

The leaders of these two groups are Darwin and Lamarck. Personally, I am inclined to agree with the latter.

To try and make all this easier for you to understand, I cannot think of any better way than to use an illustration so old that I do not know who thought of it first – so I cannot make an acknowledgement to the original author!

Followers of Darwin would say that the giraffe probably got its long neck because short-necked giraffes, unable to

get at their food, died out. Therefore the offspring of long-necked giraffes survived. Because it was their nature to be long-necked, and that nature was contained in their 'seed', they passed on that feature to their children.

Followers of Lamarck would say that because it was necessary to be long-necked in order to get at their food, generations of giraffes unconsciously *willed* themselves to get long necks, as you might will yourself to get a bigger muscle. The 'seed' of the giraffes then changed slightly over generations so that in future giraffes were born with the long necks their ancestors had acquired through need and practice.

As to which of these thinkers is right, there is not likely to be any proof. This is another of the questions, however, which you may be the one to solve in later life, if it interests you enough.

Perhaps both are equally right, and such developments are brought about through both causes combined.

The passing-on of hereditary traits

Let us get back now to the root-question: how are the characteristics of mother and father passed on to their children?

As we have already seen, the cell – any cell – which is the basic unit of life, consists of a nucleus and various particles suspended in fluid.

What the nucleus does, and what chemical ingredients its particles and fluid contain, vary according to the work of the cell within the organism (the living being) of which it is a part.

For instance, the cells of the liver differ from the cells of the muscular tissue, because they have different jobs to do. Quite different again are the cells of the reproductive

organs. Moreover, the cells of the reproductive organs differ according to whether the being of which they are part is male or female.

As will be described in more detail later, the sex organs of both male and female produce special cells to which we will give here, for the sake of clearness, the name of 'seeds'.

Those seeds produced by the woman are called *ova* (a Latin name, of which the singular is *ovum*), while the seeds produced by the male are called sperms (or spermatozoa).

Neither of these can produce anything by itself. The ovum must be fertilized by a sperm before the seed which results from the union of the two can produce a new life.

Now, every cell in your body contains in its nucleus forty-eight tiny particles called chromosomes. The nature of those chromosomes determines to a very great extent what *you are*.

They contain the germ of inherited tendencies, both physical and mental. So you see that the old tales about Good and Bad Fairies bringing gifts to the new baby's christening are not so very far out, after all!

I say *tendencies*, because you are not entirely bound by your inherited traits.

The things which happen to you during the process of development in the womb, and in your life after birth, may modify in one way or the other the original effect of the nature of those chromosomes.

You yourself, by your own will and conscience, may also modify for better or for worse some of the original possibilities of the chromosomes you were given at the time of your conception. Even in the old tales, you remember, it was often much more what the hero or heroine *did* with their gifts that counted, rather than the gifts themselves!

At the time of conception, however, such chances as that you will be tall or short, dark or fair, intelligent or dull,

placid or passionate, male or female – all these are contained in the nature of the chromosomes which come to you from both father and mother.

While every other body-cell contains forty-eight chromosomes in its nucleus, the seed-cells of both male and female contain only twenty-four.

When the sperm has fertilized the ovum by fusing with it, the result is a new combination of forty-eight chromosomes. This combination of forty-eight is different from the forty-eight chromosomes throughout the bodies of either father or mother. Yet, being made up of twenty-four from each parent, it is also very like them.

When ovum and sperm have combined into one unit, this begins to divide up in just the same way the amoeba does. The forty-eight chromosomes which are the nucleus of the sperm + ovum split up into a new set of forty-eight, and another set, and another – and so on, until there are many millions of them.

Some of the cells thus made take over one duty in the new, developing body inside the mother's womb. Some take over another, and a completely new being is on the way to being completed and born.

What that being is like has infinite possibilities, owing to the immensely long chain of heredity behind it.

The twenty-four chromosomes from the mother are all different from each other. They are like twenty-four prize packages, containing various sets of 'prizes', in the shape of what the different parts of your body and brain may be like. Each of these 'packages' has its appropriate partner in the twenty-four chromosomes of the father.

Each chromosome is like a string of beads. It is made up of a number of tiny sections called genes. It is believed that each gene contains the power to give to the child a certain characteristic. For example: brown or blue eyes, or an inclination to be tall or short.

If all a person's near ancestors have been short, the 'size' gene in his egg-cells will give shortness.

If the ancestry is evenly mixed, the 'size' gene will give tallness. For where 'tall' and 'short' are in competition, so to speak, tallness will always win.

If the ancestors have been mostly short, but some tall, then some of the egg-cells will contain 'tallness' genes, and some 'shortness' genes.

When a new child is being made, both father and mother give the influence of their 'size' genes as they received them from their own near ancestors.

The result is that:

(1) Where father and mother are tall, the children will be tall.

(2) Where father and mother are short, the children will be short.

(3) Where father is tall and mother short, or the other way round, the children will be tall.

(4) If a child of the couple in (3) marries a short person, the children may be either tall or short. The tall parent's seeds will be mixed, some containing 'shortness' and some 'tallness'. It will be left to chance to decide which of these kinds of seeds is used.

(5) If children of couples in (3) or (4) marry each other, the chances are that the greater number of their offspring will be tall, 'tallness' always being a stronger factor than 'shortness'.

The words 'tall' and 'short' used above mean *purely* tall or short; not merely to describe the outward appearance of

the person, but also to include the characteristics of their near ancestors.

Tallness and shortness can of course be influenced as a child grows by the development of his glands. We are speaking here of the 'inclination' given by heredity.

The rules given above are also true of the colour of the eyes, brown always winning – like tallness – against blue, if evenly matched.

So it is that the colour of your eyes and hair, and perhaps your constitution and the basis of your character are decided.

Remember, however, that what are given to you in these things are 'tendencies' only. In most of them it is still in your power to make or mar your life.

Why you are boy or girl

Now it follows quite logically on from what we have seen about inherited tendencies that in a sense you inherit a dual sexual character – both male and female.

In the dim past of Man's heredity there are also the two-sexed creatures.

There is therefore a special way by which it is determined whether a child will resemble chiefly his father or his mother in the matter of his own sex.

This works through the manner in which the chromosome concerned with sex in each cell of the child's body has been combined from those of father and mother.

In each cell of her body, every woman contains two large sex chromosomes. These give her all the characteristics of femaleness.

Every man, in each of his cells, however, contains one large and one small sex chromosome. From that combination comes his maleness.

But, as we have seen, when the seeds are formed by the reproductive organs of man and woman, each seed receives twenty-four chromosomes only. Each seed of the woman contains one large sex chromosome. Each seed of the man contains, on the other hand, *either* a large *or* a small sex chromosome.

When, therefore, ovum and sperm come together, their combination will contain *either* two full-sized sex chromosomes *or* one-large-and-one-small sex chromosome.

So the resulting new life, according to whether the ovum was fertilized by a sperm containing a long or a short chromosome, will develop into a girl or a boy.

When Nature makes a mistake

No one is one hundred per cent male or female. We all still carry in us the evidence that the sexes were not always differentiated from each other. Breast nipples survive uselessly in the male, and part of the female internal equipment is a tiny organ which is the undeveloped representative of the male external organ.

In our characters, too, most of us find ourselves a mixture, with some 'feminine' and some 'masculine' traits – though in the great majority of cases 'feminine' or 'masculine' predominates in us, making us visibly and obviously woman or man.

Sometimes, however, usually in families where both sides have an unusual heredity, something goes wrong.

You will remember we noted that before settling down to the present system of reproduction for general use, Nature experimented with other ways, some of which still survive in non-human forms of life.

Each human child while in the womb develops through all the phases of the past history of the race – like the tadpole

turning into the frog. But sometimes, very rarely, its development in some direction becomes stopped and does not go on properly.

That is how you get people with a hare lip or a cleft palate, and sometimes even greater disadvantages. That is also how you get people who are not properly male or female, but a mixture of the two.

These handicaps are, as I have already said, very rare, but they do occur. It will help us not to be unkind to others less fortunate than ourselves if we understand why it is.

There remain in everyone certain minor characteristics of the other sex. It seems that in the sex chromosomes of some human families there is a latent possibility to fall back to earlier stages of sexual development in the history of life.

If two parents should *both* contain in their sex chromosomes such a possibility, the fusion of their seeds would increase the likelihood of their offspring being abnormal in this way – just as, if two lines are united which both have a tendency to produce twins, there is much greater likelihood of twins than there would be in the ordinary way.

When that happens, the result is likely to be a person who obviously has both the male and the female feelings within them to an abnormal extent. This is bound to give rise to difficulties in the living of their lives – and particularly their sexual lives.

It used to be the custom generally, and still is among ignorant people, to sneer at those born with this peculiarity. Now that we know better, however, those of us lucky enough to be normal can no more despise these unfortunate beings than we can someone born with any other disability, such as a hunchback or club foot.

In one way, too, the mental anguish which they suffer through being unlike other people is a payment of the debt

of all of us to the forces of Life which have brought our kind into being along so vast and perilous a path.

They suffer, as it were, for us.

It would be wrong and absurd for us, enjoying the gift of normal sex, to adopt their ways of life or try to ape their habits, but we should recognize the difficulties under which they struggle, and repay them with kindness and understanding, while giving thanks for our own good fortune.

Bridging the gap between past and future

You may wonder why I should have included in a book whose purpose is to help you live your life, so much about the past and about Heredity.

As a matter of fact, I am only too conscious of how much I have had to leave out. But if you are interested, there are many excellent books which will help you to fill in the details.

My immediate concern is with you – and it seems to me that you can best be helped to adjust yourself to life if you first understand your place in life.

You stand at the gap between past and future. Behind you are generations of ancestors whose struggles and sufferings, work and pleasure, have combined to make you what you are – to a very great extent.

But Life does not end with You.

We should not either let ourselves get too swelled-headed in thinking of all the forces which have gone to make us or be overcome by the immensity of the prospect before us.

If there is one thing that is as nearly certain as anything in this world, it is that we stand part-way in a great chain of Life, stretching backward to the first amoeba and forward to some greater form of life than anyone has ever dreamed.

That, at any rate, is the *possibility*. If mankind fails, there

is no reason why Nature should not let it die out or blow itself up, until it is as unknown on the earth as some of the primitive forms of life whose skeletons we have unearthed, but which no longer walk the world.

Part-way to *somewhere*, at any rate, we do stand. *Where*, depends to a very great extent on you.

After the selfishness of the infant comes development through family into community life. If you want a good reason why you yourself should follow that trend, reflect for a moment on what you owe to those who have gone before you.

Limbs, faculties, senses – all developed painfully over millions of years. These are your inheritance. It is up to you to pass on into the future no less than you have been given – maybe more.

Can you accept the gift of all the life which has gone before you, without recognizing that you owe something in return?

Let us help Nature, instead of fighting against her, and do it not only by making the environment of the future – that is, the actual physical conditions of life – better than it is at present; but also by making the heredity of the future something more even than we have received.

This is a deep reason, as well as your own personal welfare, for living cleanly and with purpose.

CHAPTER V

Who am I?: Body, mind and?; Interaction of body and mind – *The marvel that is your body:* How many of you are there?; the miracle of life – *The model community:* The six systems; do not run your engine full out!; the body's defence force; can't we learn from Nature?

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Who am I?

I think we have more or less settled the question: *What am I?* in the preceding chapters, having seen how very gradually and over an immensely long time the human species came into existence – the most complex form of life yet known.

Who am I? is another very deep question, for there are several factors making up the 'I' of each of us.

It is customary in the ordinary way to think of a person as being made up of body and mind. That each of us has a body, we cannot dispute. We can see, feel and touch it. With the mind we are not on quite the same terms.

It is difficult even to define exactly what we mean by the mind. Do we mean merely the apparatus of brain and nervous system, which collects and stores impressions and enables us to express them? Some scientists think there is no more to it than that – a highly complicated telephone and recording system.

There are other people who regard the 'mind', 'personality' or 'soul' as a third and distinct thing in addition to body and brain, and using the two latter as the instruments of its development.

For the moment, I think it will be well if we shelve the

philosophic problem. It is a lovely point to argue and speculate about. Later on I will give you my own ideas on the subject, and some suggestions of the various ways in which it may be approached.

I would suggest that for the moment we shall be severely practical, accepting that we have a body: a brain encased in our skull with its 'messengers' and 'servants' acting through the nervous system; and a mind which we at any rate feel to be capable of independent thought and judgement between right and wrong.

For the purpose of living one's life and striving for the best, it is more useful to feel that we have the power to reason, and choose between good and bad, than otherwise.

Let us, therefore, first examine the actual workings of the body, which of course will include the brain and central nervous system, and of the mind.

In doing this, it will be necessary to take body and mind separately, as if they were quite distinct from each other in their workings. In actual practice, however, they are closely bound up with each other.

Thoughts can cause physical changes, and physical states can have an effect on the mind.

If a person is in pain, his mind reflects it in that he feels depressed, loses his sense of humour, and unless capable of great self-control becomes snappy and difficult.

Worry, on the other hand, which is a mental condition, can affect the body and cause ill-health.

The mental attitude to things we are required to do can also affect our physical performance of them.

If you *like* playing football, or make up your mind to be a success at it, you will do far better than if you did not care or actively disliked it.

Conversely, if we know ourselves to be physically weak in certain ways, our minds will probably respond with a feeling of inferiority in that connexion.

The interaction of a particular body with a particular mind, through the medium of a particular brain, is what constitutes *You*. For the practical purpose of examining the workings of body and mind, we must deal with each subject separately, though perhaps at the end of the book we shall be able to put these parts together again as one.

Let us, therefore, pass on to an examination of the body.

I do not intend to explain in technical detail, or to give diagrams and pictures, because there is so much ground I want to cover before I can write '*The End*'.

I would simply advise you, according to your age and the standard of education you have reached, to go further into this one field later on. Hundreds of books are available to you in the public libraries.

For it is well that you should know something of the way in which your body works, and not be quite dependent upon the 'expert'.

After all, you have got to live with your body all your life, and sometimes put up with its inconveniences as well as enjoy its advantages, so you might as well be as fully informed on the subject as you can be!

The marvel that is your body

As we have already seen, 'bodies' – whether plant, animal or human – are the flowering of the various related branches of the Tree of Life. They are related, but they are also very different. Their common ancestor is the first single-cell organism.

Think how many different parts of you there are: bone, hair, skin, fat, muscle, heart, blood-vessels, lungs, kidneys, stomach, organs of reproduction, glands and so on. So very, very many different parts, each with its own special job to do.

You are made up of millions of cells, doing between them an enormous variety of different jobs. Yet no one questions the fact that you are *one person*, and rarely does structure or behaviour suggest otherwise.

When you consider the chaos of the man-run world around us, such an achievement in organization as you are seems like a miracle.

It is true that sometimes, very rarely, people are born crippled in some way or other, but when you realize how very seldom it is, in proportion, it can only increase our admiration of Nature's work.

The model community

You can think of the body as a Model Community. Its 'foundations' and 'supports' are the bony structure, on which everything else is built. Living within that structure are the various 'families' or 'teams' which co-operate for the common good.

Within the framework provided by the skeleton, six main 'teams' work:

The Digestive and Excretory System.
The Respiratory System.
The Circulatory System.
The Nervous System.
The Glandular System.
The Reproductive System.

All these work together for the good functioning of the body, but each again consists of a team of cells carrying out its own particular work.

As in a model community, there are the 'suppliers', the 'scavengers', even the 'telephonists' and 'news-carriers'.

If you think about it, you will also see a close likeness between this body of ours and the world outside us, of which each of us is a unit. For although each organ is important to life, there are some so great and powerful that the body's welfare to a very great extent depends on them.

Just as in the world there are large and powerful countries and there are small ones, so in the body the heart, lungs and brain are 'Great Powers', each with its own 'sphere of influence'.

So long as they work in harmony together and a 'balance of power' is maintained between them, all is well. But you cannot imagine the brain and the heart and the lungs entering into competition with each other, or fighting for each other's territory!

War in the world ought to seem just as absurd.

To take the comparison further, in the modern world it is a fact that even a small country cannot suffer from internal revolution or starvation conditions without its affecting us all, directly or indirectly.

In just the same way, if even the smallest and least important of our organs is diseased, although the illness may not result in death or great suffering, yet it is likely to have a disturbing effect upon our whole being.

To meet such emergencies, Nature has made several wise provisions.

In the first place, each of our organs is built to withstand greater strain than we usually put upon them – that is to say, we do not normally run our engines 'full out'. If you know anything about cars, for instance, you know that to run the engine 'full out' all the time would soon crack it up.

The wise car-owner uses discretion. By running below the full power capacity of his engine, he conserves its strength – and when an emergency arises which calls for sudden speed or long endurance his engine will be better fitted to meet it than one which has been 'flogged to death'.

So with us. We should give our bodies no less care than a favourite engine or car, treating them without indulgence but with respect.

Alcoholic drink and fancy foods will do no harm if taken in moderation, but if our digestive systems are continually being called upon to do heavy work in dealing with them, the time will come when the strain will be too great, and the 'engine' will fail us.

Nature's second provision against emergency is the reserve of strength stored in the fatty tissue of our bodies, like the food reserves behind an army. If we live wisely and well, and do not fritter away our strength in excesses, that reserve will come in useful when one of our organs is attacked by disease.

First on the scene, however, in the event of accident or illness, will be the white blood corpuscles, which are a kind of international police force within us – always 'standing by' to resist an aggressor.

You will remember how, if you have cut yourself and some dirt has got into the wound, it has 'festered'. Yellow matter has come away from the wound. If you were young at the time you were probably quite proud of the fuss that was made, and the care taken to get it cleaned out and the cut made wholesome with peroxide or iodine.

That yellow matter consists of the dead bodies of the white corpuscles of the bloodstream which have gone into battle against the infection – and their death in large numbers means that the infection is strong.

If it is very strong, as in the case of a terrible wound, the body may not be able to make new white corpuscles quickly enough to replace its dead 'soldiers'. In that case, without medical help, the infection may win and the patient may die – or at least, in the case of an infected limb, have to lose it by amputation.

So you will see that the basis of your being, the body, is

a highly-organized community. Some of its members are stationary in their special places, doing their special jobs. Others – the 'international' services, so to speak – are ready to hurry to the place where they are most needed.

Cannot mankind find something to learn in Nature's miracle of organization? Must it necessarily take as many millions of years for an efficient world-community to evolve as it has done for the human body to evolve?

These are questions we must all face as we enter society and take up our places as responsible citizens.

I do not think it is an unreasonable conclusion to reach that if mankind would be content to learn from Nature we might realize to what extent life here on earth is interdependent.

On that basis it should be possible to build a far better and more peaceful world, in which great nations and small would work together in the knowledge that no 'body' is healthy while any of its members are sick or in opposition to the rest.

CHAPTER VI

The digestive and excretory system: Food the first essential; what is your energy?; fuelling your engine; and decarbonizing it; how your digestion works; how waste matter is separated; bad-tempered and bilious; a few main points for guidance

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The digestive and excretory system

Just as we have to take the body as the basis of our life on earth, so we must accept that the basis of life in the body is the function of eating, digestion and excretion.

That is to say, if we are to live at all we must eat; we must extract nourishment from our food and build it into our bodies to replace energy used in living; and we must cast out of our systems the waste matter which would otherwise poison them.

We might compare our life in the body with the life of the country in which we live. All the little comforts and luxuries available to the people would mean nothing at all if there were not adequate supplies of essential foods, and means of distribution and disposal of them throughout the country.

That is why, in war-time, rationing of essentials must be resorted to. To-day, though the war is ended, the dislocation it has caused in the world still makes the production and distribution of food the greatest headache of world statesmen. It is even necessary, as well as right, to ensure that former enemy countries are supplied with foodstuffs, since their distress will otherwise react upon the whole world.

It would be of no use living on a diet of jellies and ginger biscuits, however nice they may be at an occasional party.

You can appreciate those little extras all the more because they come rarely, but for the business of daily living you need the sustenance of basic nourishing foods.

Have you ever thought of the amount of energy you use up in a day? What it is? Where it comes from?

There are days of holiday when you run, jump, cycle, or perhaps climb cliffs and rocks. There are days of school when, apart from the exercise of athletics, your mind is working busily – that is a kind of energy-using, too. There are other times when you are doing nothing in particular. Even then, whether sitting still, lying in the sun or even asleep in bed, you are using up energy – if it is by no more than breathing.

Have you ever thought of all the hidden workings which go on inside you, and of which you are not aware unless there is something wrong and you have a pain to call your attention to them?

For quite a long time after a meal, your stomach and intestines are digesting your food, without your thinking about it – extracting the good nourishment from the waste, sending the goodness into the blood to enrich it, and preparing the waste to be expelled.

The goodness is carried through the blood to enrich and rebuild the whole body. The useless part accumulates until you feel the impulse to release it from your body, both solid and fluid.

All the while these processes are going on. Yet until the point has come when your body makes it plain to you that it needs either to take in more food or to let out the waste, you are not aware of it all unless there is something wrong.

The services done for you by the Digestive and Excretory System are usually unobtrusive and remarkably efficient.

You can compare it, in fact, to the 'Services and Supply' Section of your private interior army. The nourishment is brought in, put to good use and the wastes carted away.

Or – another comparison – the complex machine which is your body is stoked with fuel, the consumable parts of which are 'burnt up' to supply the driving-force, while the wastes are left and disposed of.

For, in a sense, your body is like a steam engine. The fuel which is consumed provides the driving-force which makes the wheels go round. Your 'energy' is just that force.

So you will see how important it is that your body should be given the right nourishment, under the correct conditions, and should be treated with respect.

Certain fancy foods may be great fun to eat, and there is nothing wrong in eating them if you enjoy it, if they contain nothing harmful. But you have got to have the real life-giving things – milk, water, bread, fruit and vegetables – as well, and as the mainstay of life.

I am sure your own common sense tells you that. For although it is fun to gorge yourself on lighter and more frivolous foods now and then, the thought of eating nothing else all the time would seem rather awful.

Nourishment should also be taken under the correct conditions, because in that way the natural processes of digestion are assisted. When your mother tells you not to gulp your food, to sit properly and to rest a short while after meals, she is not just being stuffy.

Nor is it the case, as you may sometimes have suspected, that she is exercising 'parental control' and showing who is boss in the house.

You can overdo care of your body, as you can overdo everything else. But without being a fuss-pot at all, you will be wise to remember that your body deserves at least as much care as, say, your bicycle – if you want it to run smoothly and safely.

It might be as well here, before going on to describe the actual processes of digestion and excretion, to add a further note on the care which you owe to this 'engine' of yours.

As we have seen, half these processes are concerned with the separating and storage of waste matter prior to expulsion from the body. There is nothing disgusting about that particular function. It is natural and common sense, and you should meet it in a natural and common-sense manner, building up good regular habits.

You should try, on going to the toilet first thing in the morning, to rid your body by defaecation and urination of the solid and liquid wastes which have accumulated during the night. At no time, however awkward or embarrassing the occasion may seem, should you be held back by false shame from carrying out this necessary function when you can feel it is needed.

For such shame is 'false shame'. Why be embarrassed about a common human necessity, shared by all, and vitally important in itself to good and healthy living?

You know what would happen if a sewer got blocked. The wastes would overflow and poison the surrounding air. In just the same way, if you block the waste-channels of your body, either wilfully or through irregular habits, you are making it possible for your body to be poisoned by its own wastes.

If you make a real effort at the formation of good habits you will find that Nature will respond to the attempt.

Let us have a look, then, at what actually happens when the food starts on its journey through your body – for it has a very long way to go after it enters the mouth.

In the first place, at the sight and smell of food certain things happen which may or may not be known to us.

Appetite is increased or decreased, depending on whether or not we like what is offered. The mouth 'waters', preparing the saliva which is the first of the digestive juices to act upon the food. The stomach also begins to prepare its special juices.

We begin to chew our portion of food with the teeth,

breaking it up into small particles which combine with the saliva to form a 'bolus' ready for swallowing.

Has it ever occurred to you that we can only easily swallow things of a certain shape? A star-shaped pill, for instance, would be very difficult to get down. In making pills round, we are imitating Nature's provision which causes our food, through teeth and saliva, to be moulded into the round shape before being swallowed.

The business of the various digestive juices – both the saliva and those others manufactured in the stomach and other organs – is to 'break down' the food so that it can be absorbed by the bloodstream and its goodness carried throughout the body.

After swallowing, the food travels down a tube into the stomach, which works rather like a washing-machine squeezing the dirt from the laundry – though what the stomach squeezes out of the food is the wholesome nourishment.

The wastes which are of no use to the body are set apart.

Like the soap in the washing-machine, the stomach employs a powerful gastric juice made in its own factory there, to get the goodness out of every drop.

By the way, I expect you know that your stomach is a relatively small thing, shaped rather like a baby's feeding-bottle, situated in the upper left side of the abdomen.

The part of your body which you were probably told, as a child, to refer to as your 'tummy' is not the stomach, but the whole abdomen – the part between ribs and haunches which contains all the other organs of the digestive system.

Below the stomach are the large and small intestines. You can imagine these best as being like hose pipes, coiled up in the abdomen – really yards of them.

The half-digested food passes first into the small intestine. Here two more digestive juices, manufactured in the little 'factories' called the pancreas, liver and gall-bladder act on

the food, and most of the goodness is fed into the blood-stream.

The remains of the food, now largely waste, then pass along the large intestine; through its tubing up the right side of the abdomen; across and down the left side, and so out through the rectum – which is the correct name for the back opening of your body – in the form of faeces, or solid waste matter.

The whole alimentary canal, as the digestive system is called, is about thirty feet long, and it takes one meal from thirty to forty-eight hours to complete the journey.

The small and large intestines are so called because the small one, although it is much the longer, is narrower and coiled into a small space. The large one is the wider, and crosses the abdomen from right to left. It is sometimes called the bowel.

Like the stomach, the intestines also have a 'washing-machine' movement, so that the food is digested by two processes – the mechanical 'squeezing' action, and the chemical action of the juices made in the various 'factories' of stomach, liver, pancreas and gall-bladder.

Now if you have followed me so far, you will be wondering why only the disposal of the solid waste matter has been dealt with, knowing that your body has to release fluid waste matter as well.

To deal with this, there are special twin organs – the kidneys. These are situated in the upper back part of the abdomen, one on each side of the spinal column.

They too draw off waste fluid products from the blood-stream, and pass them down through two tubes into the bladder. When the bladder is full, you get a 'call' to release the fluid waste.

Other water-dissolved waste passes out through the pores of the skin in the form of perspiration, which you will notice particularly when you are 'burning-up' your fuel

unusually fast in strenuous exercise. This is due to the action of thousands of little sweat glands with their outlets through the skin.

Talking of the kidneys, however, reminds me of the liver! That is so important to our well-being that it cannot be passed over too casually.

As we have seen, it helps in the digestive process by manufacturing a special juice, called bile. If you get a 'chill on the liver' and upset that delicate organ, you may get excess of bile. Jaundice, caused by the overflow of too much bile, may even turn your face yellow for the time being!

Again, if you overeat yourself on too rich foods, and overstrain the liver, you will be uncomfortably aware of an overproduction of bile in the liver 'factory'. You will, in fact, be 'bilious', or 'liverish' – both in body and temper – a condition which I expect all of us have suffered from at some time or another after some special festivity.

In addition, the liver absorbs other waste products from the blood, through a large vein which runs through it.

I think this may be a good point at which to note the very great extent to which body and mind are dependent on each other.

The 'liverish' state is also a bad-tempered state. Increased activity of the sweat-glands can be caused not only by physical exercise, but also by mental conditions such as guilt or fear. Worry and anxiety may disturb the workings of the gastric juices to so great an extent that gastric ulcers are frequently found in persons of a nervous temperament – and in such cases often have a mental rather than a physical origin.

So you will see that the complicated digestive and excretory system is one of the main foundations of your being. When its parts are working in harmony, you have the basis of both good health and good temper.

Any actual disease – as apart from passing disturbances – which attacks the organs of the digestive system is liable to give rise to a great deal of trouble. So I think we should all realize how important it is to us, and take reasonable care, without becoming cranks or faddists, to keep it in good running order.

Let us work out a few main points for our guidance.

(1) It is best not to overeat.

Your 'internal workings' can stand a certain amount of it, because they are built to take a greater strain than should be put upon them all the time. But if the strain is kept up, you will obviously suffer from 'tummy' trouble.

You will also find greater pleasure in eating – and there is no reason why we should not find pleasure in eating enjoyable foods – if you do stop at the point where you could take a little more, instead of waiting for Nature's 'Stop!' warning.

You will find that almost everything in life loses its savour if you have nothing more to hope for.

Another thing: If you overeat you become drowsy and sleepy. Mental activity slows, because the digestive system has to receive an increased supply of blood to deal with the heavy work placed on it, which consequently means that the brain can only have a lessened 'fuel' supply.

Remember that, if you want to remain alert!

(2) Fancy foods are best left for special occasions.

For one thing, an eternal diet of strawberries and cream would become boring and end by being actually distasteful. Nature has apparently made a wise provision by which the staple articles of diet, containing the basic essentials of life, can be taken every day without that result.

We can have our cake, but we ought also – not as a matter of discipline but of common sense – to eat our bread and butter too!

(3) We should take care not to make things difficult for our digestive systems.

We can assist them by chewing our food sensibly, so that the stomach is not called upon to deal with unbroken lumps of food.

It will also be helpful if we do not allow ourselves to get into a worrying habit – which never serves any useful purpose anyway, and can have a very bad effect upon the digestive processes.

Sitting upright and not rushing through our meals will also help to keep the machine running smoothly.

(4) The internal 'sewage system' should be kept in good working order.

This is best done by the formation of regular habits of internal cleanliness to assist the body to dispose of its wastes.

This, too, is one of the physical functions whose working is closely allied to that of the mind. A constipated person usually feels dull and listless, and often bad-tempered.

Be clean inside, and the outside world will look a lot brighter!

CHAPTER VII

The respiratory system: Why fire burns; how our internal 'engine' burns; nose, throat and lungs; bellows, accordion and cauliflower!; how medicine can help those with lung diseases; continuous adaptation as a rule of life

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The respiratory system

What would you do if a small cinder fell out of the fireplace on to the rug and started a small smouldering fire? Shovel it up again into the fire, of course, if you could. But suppose the rug had begun to smoulder too?

You would throw on water, you may say. Yes, that would do if there were some water handy, although in your enthusiasm you might make quite a mess.

There is another way, just as effective and probably less messy – that is, to 'smother' the fire with a cloth. Which is, after all, all that the water does, anyway.

When we speak of 'smothering' a fire, we are making a very exact choice of words to describe our action. 'Smothering' is precisely what we do when we put out fire either with water or by covering up the smouldering object so thoroughly that no air can reach it.

Fire cannot burn without the oxygen which is in the air.

Flame is in fact a phenomenon produced by the chemical combination of the burning material with the oxygen in the air around it. That is why you must have a 'draught' through the homely fire on your hearth. If flame has no access to oxygen, it will simply flicker away and die.

We have already compared the energy-producing processes of our body to the working of the engine relying for its power upon the burning of fuel. The chemical processes which our millions of body-cells carry out need a similar 'burning' of the fuel-food to enable them to carry on.

Like the burning of the furnace fire or the sparking of the combustion engine, our body's fuel-burning also needs oxygen and cannot carry on without it for more than a few minutes.

So vital, in fact, is this life-giving gas – one of a number of gases present in our atmosphere – that the process by which our bodies extract it from the air has become almost instinctive and unconscious.

That process is breathing.

For the greater part of our lives, sleeping and waking, the breathing process is carried on by the body without the conscious direction of the mind. If we do stop to think about it, it somehow appears so strange and wonderful that it seems difficult to understand how our millions of breaths are drawn without thought.

I expect you have all tried, at some time or other, to see how long you could hold your breath. Not for very long, I expect. You try very hard, you begin to go red in the face, and finally you gasp and give it up – you have just got to go on breathing.

Of course, there are a few exceptional people, like pearl-divers and Indian fakirs, who by long and difficult training cultivate the power of suspending their breathing for quite long periods, compared to the rest of us. But in the end they, too, reach their limit, and must breathe again.

If you did not, you see, your little fire of life would flicker away and die very quickly.

The will to life is immensely strong in all of us. Even under the worst conditions, we fight to retain it. That is

quite natural and right, when you consider through how many millions of years Life has been struggling up from nothingness – clinging, adapting itself and insisting on survival in face of every kind of difficulty and danger. The strongest of our instincts is this will to live.

That is why, through the many wonderful stages of development of the human body, the breathing process has become so deeply engrained as a necessary habit that we cannot long suspend it by will.

How, then, does the actual mechanism work, by which we 'burn' oxygen in that complicated series of chemical factories which is our body?

Well, first of all, the air is taken in through the nose. That is, I hope it always is, by all of you, because if you breathe through your mouth you are short-circuiting some of the natural filter-processes which Nature intended to be used to remove some of the impurities of the air around us.

You have probably noticed how, if there is a thick fog, especially in London and the other big cities, the inside of your nostrils becomes quite black. That is because the tiny hairs in the nostrils have retained the sooty particles suspended in the city air.

If they had all been breathed in, and not prevented from going further, just think how blackened and clogged your breathing apparatus – the Respiratory System – would be by now!

Such impurities are present in the air all the time, even if not so thickly as when there is a fog. The special arrangements inside the nose are there to prevent the worst of them from going any further.

Having entered the nose, the partly filtered air passes through the nasal passages and down through the 'windpipe' into the lungs. All these passages are lined with a special moist surface which catches and removes further

impurities so that the air, by the time it reaches the lungs, is fit to burn in our 'furnace'.

You are not usually conscious of that special moisture until you have a cold, with all the unpleasantness and interference with breathing that means.

But what, you may ask, is the force which takes the air up the nose and down through the respiratory system?

That question we can best answer for ourselves by thinking of a bellows or an accordion.

If either of those instruments is first compressed, then expanded, air is drawn inside – for as you probably know *Nature abhors a vacuum.*

If space is created, something must – at any rate under the conditions existing on this earth – rush in to fill it, whether it be the sea when land sinks down owing to a subterranean earthquake, or the air under conditions such as we have just described.

The 'bellows' or 'accordion' working in you is the lungs.

The lungs, like others of our organs – the intestines, for instance – are very much larger than you might think. If all their tiny cells, with their spider-web walls, could be opened flat and spread on the floor, they would cover an area of a hundred square yards!

But being all crinkled up together, they occupy – along with the heart – the fairly small space protected by the framework of our ribs. The ribs and the top of the spinal column form, if you like, the hangar in which are housed the twin balloons of our lungs.

To call them balloons may, however, give you a wrong idea of what the lungs look like. So may the comparison with bellows and accordion, although in their working there are points of similarity with all these.

I think the best illustration to give you some idea of their shape and appearance is comparison with that homely vegetable the cauliflower.

You know how the cauliflower, when the outer leaves have been taken away, shows a thick stalk from which thinner stalks branch away, with still thinner and thinner stalks growing out of them, at the very end of which are the little white bobbles which are the 'flower'.

Hold your cauliflower upside down, and you have some idea of the appearance of the lungs. The thick stalk of the 'wind-pipe' divides and subdivides into ever thinner and thinner passages. Finally, these branch off into tiny air cells – like the 'flower'.

Only, remember, ours is a 'double cauliflower', branching off from the main stem into twin sets of 'flowers', the right and left lungs.

In the walls of all these tubes are blood-vessels, getting thinner and finer as the tubes themselves become thinner and finer, until when they reach the air-cells they are indescribably delicate.

When the air cells compress, like the bellows, we are 'breathing out'. The natural reaction set up by this is 'breathing in', when the air cells are filled up again with life-giving air.

Now each of these little air-cells, as we have seen in our study of all organic life, is a small chemical factory on its own account. Their particular job is to extract the oxygen from the air, pass it through their own delicate blood-vessels into the main bloodstream; and transform the waste 'air' into another gas, carbon dioxide, which is then 'breathed out'.

Now it is a very remarkable thing, and a symptom of the way in which all life on earth is interdependent, that while animal and human life 'carries on' by burning oxygen and giving off carbon dioxide, plant life 'carries on' by burning carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen.

So plant and animal life help each other, co-operating to keep our atmosphere well balanced for our mutual good.

Another lesson from Nature in co-operation and the unity of all life, from which mankind might well try to learn in ordering its own affairs!

Similarly, the intricate organization of the respiratory system, with its tubes and chemical factories, can work really efficiently only so long as all the various parts are in good order and co-operating for the common good. They must co-operate, you should notice, not only with each other, but also with all the other parts of the body to which they render an essential service.

The lungs are well defended from external injury by the 'hangar' formed by the ribs, the breastbone, the top of the spinal column and a wide, strong muscular band which separates chest and abdomen. But as you well know, the 'hangar' is not a rigid structure, nor could we afford for it to be so.

It must be elastic, in the sense that bellows and accordion are elastic, to permit the operations of breathing in and out to be carried on.

Now if you think about it, you will realize that efficient breathing depends upon the air-tight condition of the chest. A bellows with a tear in it will not work any more.

If the lungs are to swell while 'breathing in', it can only be because the pressure of the air rushing into them is greater than the pressure in the space around them.

If the lungs were emptied and air were admitted to the chest so that the pressure outside the lungs but inside the chest cavity were greater than that inside the lungs, it would not be possible to take another inward breath.

Doctors have been able to make use of this fact for the good of those suffering from affections of the lungs.

The right or left lung, as the case may be, is deflated by the introduction of air through the chest wall. The patient continues breathing through the use of the other lung, while

the sick one is rested so that the natural defensive processes are given a better chance to overcome the enemy. Later, the mended lung may be inflated again, by gradually allowing the air in the chest cavity (outside the lung) to be absorbed – and so reversing the pressure.

The Respiratory System is so intricate and delicate that it would be surprising if nothing ever went wrong, especially in the conditions created by our city civilization.

Of course, if the body is in fine condition and we are leading healthy lives and generally looking after ourselves, even if certain impurities do get through they will be successfully beaten off.

We have also, within the body itself, a continuous process of adaptation to circumstances.

When unhealthy particles enter, the lungs – like the rest of our organs – adapt themselves to meet the situation. Unless the threatening influence is altogether too strong, or for some reason our general health has been undermined, they develop a power of resistance which keeps us in health.

That is the principle on which inoculation is based – that the introduction into the body of a small infection will stimulate the defence processes of the body into greater activity against that particular threat.

So you see, just as we human beings are in a continual process of adaptation to new conditions in our personal and business lives, so also are the parts of which we are composed.

The battle against harmful influences goes on all the time, in all of us, and mostly we win – without our minds knowing anything about it.

But if, through unhealthy living conditions in smoke-filled slums where there is little plant life to refresh the air with new supplies of oxygen, the reserves in the body are not strong enough to combat malignant germs – then

diseases of the Respiratory System and particularly of the lungs may well arise.

So you see it is no fable that country air and country life are particularly healthful.

When we can, we should 'give our lungs a treat' by exercise and deep breathing in the open air. And we might, at the same time, make a resolution to do all in our power as responsible citizens to give greater opportunities of healthy living to those largely deprived of them to-day by the way our society is run.

CHAPTER VIII

The circulatory system: The blood as fuel-carrier; the work of the heart; your internal railway system; how the blood is renewed; blood transfusion; advances in medical knowledge; our hearts must be treated with respect!

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The circulatory system

I expect most of you, while you were reading the last chapter, realized some of the difficulties a writer is up against when he tries to explain step by step processes closely connected with each other.

You will remember that I warned you not to make the error of assuming that body and mind were separate things, because it is necessary to deal separately with them. In just the same way, we must never lose sight of the fact that the Six Main Systems of the body are dependent upon one another and upon the well-being of the whole.

For instance, in the last chapter we referred to the manner in which the tiny branch blood-vessels in the walls of the air-cells of the lungs carry off oxygen into the bloodstream, and arrange for the disposal of carbon dioxide.

At that point, you may well have wondered where the workings of the heart came into the matter – for as you know the heart acts the part of a central pump, from which the blood is sent out all over the body, and to which it returns.

The heart is of about the same size and shape as your closed fist. Along with the lungs, it occupies a well-defended position behind the ribs, on the left side.

Although we think of it as one organ, in fact it consists

of two separate 'chambers', each with its own duty to perform. These are of course closely connected and related to each other both in their nature and in their work. Each is also subdivided again into two parts for special purposes.

The right side of the heart is the part connected with the circulation of the blood through the lungs. The left side deals with the circulation throughout the rest of the body.

The human child in the womb does not have a circulation independent of his mother's blood until some months after conception. Until that time, his existence is most intimately bound up with hers.

Then comes the exciting moment for the mother when the child moves, changing position inside her, and his little heart begins to beat. This beating is loud enough to be heard if the ear is placed against the expectant mother's abdomen.

Even after this, for as long as the child remains in the womb, he absorbs nourishment from the mother through the cord which connects him with her. After birth, when the cord is cut, the child attains an independent life, with separate blood circulation, digestive functions and the power of breath.

The beating of the heart may well be compared to the throbbing of a powerful pump, for that indeed is what it is. The force of that pumping sends the blood, fresh and red with oxygen from the lungs, into the left side of the heart.

Passing out through a large artery, it continues through narrower and narrower branching passageways, to all regions of the body.

You will get some idea of the manner in which the blood reaches all the extremities if you look at a detailed map of the countryside. The big railway lines start from the main termini, Euston, St Pancras, and so on; they branch out to lesser termini, Manchester Central, Exeter Central etc.; and then branch and branch again and again until

the tiny rural stations are reached: Little Cottenham, Chetwold and Ilking-on-the-Mud!

Your bloodstream 'map' is very similar. Yet long and involved as is the journey that your blood must follow – to the smallest 'stations' and back – it takes only about a minute to complete it, each time!

As the blood passes outwards on its journey, it is loaded with oxygen, like a goods train. It unloads the oxygen for 'burning' as 'fuel' in the cell 'factories'; and loads up again with carbon dioxide rejected by the 'factories' as a waste product of their activity.

In this process the blood loses its bright red colour, and takes on a bluish tinge, showing the changed nature of its load.

I hope you will notice once more the 'democratic' principles of Nature – we all have both red and blue blood in our veins!

When it has completed the outward journey, the blood begins its homeward journey back through the narrowest passageways into the larger and larger ones, the main veins.

It reaches and passes through the right side of the heart, and is 'shunted' back into the lungs to unload its burden of carbon dioxide. This is 'breathed out'.

A new load of oxygen – freshly 'breathed in' – is then loaded up again, and the blood starts on its journey all over again.

It is a bit hard, you may think, that the blood never gets a rest! Pumped from the left side of the heart, all the way over the body, back again, into the right side, through the lungs, back into the left side of the heart … and off again!

After all, even our strongest iron-and-steel built locomotives need renewal, and have to be kept in a constant state of good repair.

So, too, the renewal of the blood has been provided for, and in a very marvellous way. The wear and tear of the different ingredients which make up the blood is very hard indeed, so special arrangements exist for their constant renewal.

Blood itself is a complex substance, consisting half of fluid – mostly water – and half of millions and millions of tiny cells called corpuscles floating in that fluid. Rather like the bits of lemon floating in the lemon squash.

The corpuscles are of two kinds.

We have already mentioned the white ones, the body's 'defence force', always first on the scene to fight infection.

The others are red, and they are very important too. They are the 'goods trucks' which load and unload with oxygen and carbon dioxide as the blood 'goods train' makes its complete journey round the body.

Each red cell works and lives about a month. Then, exhausted and useless, it is 'shunted' into the spleen, a small organ situated behind the stomach. There, discarded for the time being, the worn-out red cell material is stored for use in emergency – just as in war-time the old, half-worn trucks had to be brought into use in time of national scarcity.

There is no need to worry about the high 'death' rate of these red cells, because all the time the red marrow in your bones is hard at work replacing them. This is done, in fact, at the rate of a million every second.

The white corpuscles are fewer in number than the red ones. Indeed, the proportion is only one to every 500 red corpuscles. Their 'death' rate is also high, though it varies according to the extent to which they may be called on in each particular case to repel infection. Like the red corpuscles, they are quickly replaced under normal conditions.

In addition to its vital function of transporting oxygen and carbon dioxide to and from all the cells of the body,

the blood also maintains the natural heat of the body at a more or less constant temperature of about ninety-eight degrees Fahrenheit.

So now you will understand why such a fuss is made if you are found to 'have a temperature'! If it varies far from normal, something must be wrong.

The amount of blood circulating in the veins of the average person is from ten to twelve pints. So quickly and efficiently are new supplies made available that we are not in serious danger unless we lose nearly half of it – but that is the danger mark.

If so great an amount is lost by internal or external bleeding, it must be replaced from an outside source. Efficient as the blood-manufacturing 'factories' are, they cannot face a job as big as that.

Throughout the history of mankind, attempts have been made to replace lost blood by blood transfusion, but it was only as recently as the 1914–18 war that really efficient methods were discovered.

These have been continually improved upon, until to-day 'blood donors' and 'blood banks' are looked upon almost as a matter of course.

A person can be a 'blood donor' only to another person of a congenial group. Blood has been found, throughout the world, to fall into four main classes. Blood given for transfusion must be carefully graded for use only in appropriate cases.

To give blood from one person to another whose blood was of a quite different type would mean that the bloods would not 'mix', and no good would be done. Certain kinds of blood will blend with other kinds, but refuse obstinately to combine with yet others.

The 'blood bank' idea came into being through a rather amazing discovery. It was found that where great loss of blood has occurred, the essential thing is to replace not the

corpuscles but the fluid part of the blood in the veins of the sick person. Once the quantity of blood-fluid in the veins has been increased, the sick person's own corpuscle-factories will at once respond and pour out their product.

So the idea came into being that if the corpuscles were drained off from blood given by a donor, the fluid part could then be dried into a powder – very much like the dried milk you get in tins. For of course ordinary blood not treated in this way very quickly congeals, goes bad and becomes worse than useless.

During the recent war, the method of drying the blood-fluid and transporting it great distances was extensively used to save the lives of soldiers in danger on isolated fronts.

The dried blood-fluid was mixed with water and injected into the veins of a soldier who had lost a lot of blood, thus encouraging his own corpuscle-factories to stock the new fluid with their product and set the blood 'goods train' working again at the time of his greatest need.

Anaemia is another condition of which you may have heard, where there is a deficiency of the blood – not through injury, but through a weakness of the 'machinery' for the manufacture of red corpuscles. It may be caused by a lack of materials vital to the 'blood-factories' – and this lack can be supplied by giving the patient foods or medicines rich in iron and liver extract.

Where the 'machinery' for manufacture of the white corpuscles is weak, the body will lack its white 'defenders', and even minor cuts will be dangerous because the escaping blood will fail to clot, and the bleeding will go on indefinitely.

Fortunately this is a very rare condition, though, sadly for a few families, it is also a hereditary one.

Other advances in the practice of medicine have been made by using our knowledge of the circulation of the blood. It has been found possible to combat certain diseases

by means of injection into the bloodstream of serums and vaccines.

A serum drawn from animals which have suffered from a certain disease contains ready-made defenders created in the animals' blood while fighting the attack. Once the serum has been injected into a person, the transplanted defenders take up their stations in the new area to help defeat the enemy. So you see, it is not only in the garden that we do transplanting!

A vaccine, on the other hand, actually contains small numbers of the germs against which the person desires to be protected. When they have entered his bloodstream, they irritate his own defenders into mobilizing strongly to repel them.

These are the principles on which inoculation and vaccination are carried out.

You will notice that without our knowledge of the Circulatory System and its workings and the duties of the corpuscles, prevention of certain virulent diseases could not have been begun.

When you realize that less than three hundred years ago practically every other person was pock-marked, you will understand what great good has been done by these means in preventing smallpox alone!

The most common defects likely to arise in the Circulatory System are the kinds of 'heart disease' which affect the valves in the pump mechanism.

These valves make sure that the blood flows always in the correct direction, whichever it may be, in the right or left side of the heart, and does not run back the wrong way. You will find just the same kind of arrangement in a boiler.

You will imagine the confusion which would result in the whole of the delicate workings of this system if such a catastrophe should occur.

Unless there is some inborn weakness, however, our hearts are able, like the rest of our organs, to stand considerable exertion. Our literal, like our metaphorical hearts, I might add!

But, as with everything else, we should treat them with respect though not with too much fuss, and not make a habit of overdoing things.

CHAPTER IX

The nervous system and the brain: Are you 'brainy'?; what the brain-cells do; the 'cave-man' in us; the automatic telephone switchboard; that giraffe's neck again; the nerves, and what they do; what are we?

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The nervous system and the brain

During your school life you have probably found a good deal of emphasis placed upon having 'brains'.

In fact, during our years of school, we are liable to get a rather unbalanced picture of the kind of person it is desirable to try to be.

Book-learning is not by any means the most important thing in life. It is desirable, because it can be useful, in both spiritual and material ways.

The wider your knowledge, the broader-minded and better-informed person you can hope to become – that is, if you do not concentrate on scholastic triumphs to the exclusion of the real living experience which develops character.

To have 'brains' – in the sense of having natural aptitude for learning – is a very useful thing, though it brings its own pitfalls.

It can lead to conceit and a habit of looking down on others not so endowed. This may easily cause you to become a very unpopular and unhappy person.

On the other hand, lack of 'brains' in that sense can also be a considerable handicap. It can, however, bring its own blessing, if we learn from it to take care to develop a habit of industry which may in the end take us further than those who are more 'clever'.

Whichever of these two kinds of person, the brainy or the not-so-brainy, you may belong to, it should be healthy for you to realize that the difference between them is much smaller than you may suppose.

Indeed, the difference between our brain and that of the ape, our nearest 'poor relation', is very much less than we usually flatter ourselves it is.

This should be no reason for despair, but rather for hope and belief in the future. It leaves such very great scope for the further advancement of mankind through those who come after us.

Like the frog going through the tadpole processes, we are still tied in our behaviour to many of the primitive reactions of our cave-men ancestors. Only as we grow away from them further and further will the full possibilities of mankind be realized.

What, then, is our brain?

It is the instrument of our intelligence, the mechanical means by which sensations are experienced and facts apprehended. In so far as this is its function, it resembles the brain of lesser creatures, and merely has a wider scope on the same plane as theirs.

Where it goes beyond theirs is in the capacity to apprehend abstract ideas.

You will remember how we traced the development of the child in the womb through stages corresponding to the evolutionary history leading to the existence of mankind.

It is in brain development that mankind has outstripped earlier forms of life. That is to say, the special cells which form the human brain are of greater variety and have taken on even more specialized jobs than in other forms of life.

While the parent cells which begin to make the unborn child are splitting up and dividing among themselves the different kinds of work to be done in the body, some of the new-made cells in the region of the top of the spine begin

to develop into what will later be the brain of the new being.

As these new sets of cells grow, they share out among themselves different jobs again. Some go to make up the part of the brain which is concerned with the working of our body; others, the part specially concerned with keeping balance while walking, and performing specially complicated movements like dancing.

Others, again, form the 'impersonal', thinking part of the brain; others, the 'memory mechanism'. There are other sections where our emotional reactions are recorded, and even a part so closely connected with character that injury to it can result in a change in the person's whole nature.

The actual appearance of the brain inside the strong bony defence called the skull is like a shelled walnut. It is divided like the walnut into two connected parts, and has a similarly crinkly surface. That crinkliness, like the crinkliness of the lungs, has the advantage of getting a large surface into a small space.

It is believed that in the quality of this surface lies the answer to the mystery of why some brains are 'sharper' than others.

The material of which the brain is made, like that of all other parts of the body, is the millions of special cells, each with their separate functions, which have developed to carry out their particular jobs.

You will remember how we noticed that the most vital functions of the body, like breathing and digestion, are carried on without our conscious effort. That is to say, these activities, absolutely necessary to life, go on whether or not we 'think' about them.

That is because there is a special section of the brain constantly on the job of seeing that these functions are carried out. So ingrained have certain habits become through repetition by thousands of generations before us that the

part of the brain whose concern they are carries on without our having to be bothered about them.

That is how it comes about that ever greater and greater advances are possible. If we had to give conscious thought to every breath, every act of digestion and every movement, we should get nothing else done!

As we shall see in a later chapter, this mechanism by which we react in certain ways without conscious thought carries with it certain dangers.

It is excellent in so far as it enables us to carry on the daily business of breathing, digesting, etc. without concern.

When, however, we let ourselves be swayed by our primitive instincts in more important matters, we are liable to fall into error and make bad mistakes.

You should never forget that during the early evolution of mankind, hunger, fear and sexual need gained the strength of enormous forces. Primitive man would kill in order to relieve any of those three urges.

We have learned, to a certain extent, not to kill. We must also be careful every day to study in ourselves the extent to which hatred, prejudice and self-seeking arising from those primitive feelings surge up in us.

Not until mankind has learned to control those ingrained and usually unconscious reactions by really 'growing up' can we have peace in the world, or live in harmony together.

Why wait until evolution breeds them out? Each one of us, in watching and guarding against the primitive reaction in ourselves, can help the progress on. But we will talk about this more fully later.

Meanwhile, let us think of that part of the brain which organizes our more primitive reactions as an automatic telephone switchboard.

Connected to it from all over the body are the thousands of nerves which act as message-carriers to and from the brain.

Let us suppose that you want to carry out some everyday action. We will not take as an example breathing or digesting, because the special part of the brain now does these things for us quite automatically – though the process, of which we are not conscious, is similar.

Let us therefore take as an example actions for which a certain amount of conscious thought is needed: getting ready to do your homework, for example.

You have had your tea, and a short rest. At the back of your mind, as we say, is the thought that that homework has got to be done. The thought is 'at the back of your mind' because it has been sufficiently strongly impressed that the memory mechanism has, as it were, made a special note of it.

You look at the clock. Your eyes – in themselves a wonderfully intricate mechanism like a super-camera – convey through delicate nerves to your brain the sight of the clock.

In the brain, special cells have long since been impressed through teaching and habit with the power of translating the position of the clock hands into terms of 'the time'. This message, relayed to the 'thinking' part of the brain, makes you realize that if the work is to be done you had better get a move on.

Then, so swiftly that you hardly seem to think about it, the brain sends down a message to your legs and feet that, since you must get up, they should begin to move. The muscles to which the message is conveyed go into action, levering you out of your chair.

You stand. With that action, the special part of the brain concerned with balance sends messages – of which you are usually quite unconscious, because walking upright is now a long habit of mankind – to muscles all over the body, which obediently brace themselves to pull against the force of gravity. Otherwise you would collapse into a heap.

You know that you need books, ink and paper. Messages go to your eyes, to your neck; you turn your head and look round the room.

The eyes send back to the brain a picture of the room. From one part of the brain to another passes the information that the things you need are on a small table in the corner of the room.

Again messages to legs and feet, and balance-messages too. You walk across the room.

In order to illustrate that all 'messages' do not originate from the brain, let us suppose that in crossing the room you stumble against something lying on the floor. The sensitive nerves of your foot, feeling the blow and perhaps the pain, send that message to the brain, so that you become aware of the obstacle even if you have not used your eyes to see it.

Messages to the muscles of back, arms and hands as you bend down and pick up the things you need. More to legs and feet as you walk across to your desk, and to the haunches as you sit down. To the hands and arms as you spread out your books, pick up your pen and begin to write.

So far you have called into action those parts of the brain concerned with bodily functions and with movement. Now perhaps you have to use the third – that connected with the abstract idea. Mathematics, literature, geography, history – all may call upon this part of your brain.

Have you ever seen a 'one' – apart from the sign representing it, or one 'of something', I mean? Have you ever seen a 'good'? These are abstract, as against solid and concrete things.

In the course of your homework, the special part of your brain which deals with these things is called into action.

It is particularly in the development of this part of the brain that humanity has gone beyond other kinds of life.

We have seen how certain actions have become ingrained

habits of our kind. It is also possible for each of us to add to ourselves certain habits of our own.

In the first place, although man's history as an upright creature comes to our aid, we have as babies to learn to walk upright – perfecting by practice the appropriate brain-cells in that particular work.

We learn many other things, too.

Let us suppose, for instance, that you learn to type. At first you stumble about on the keyboard of the typewriter, and think you never will be able to master the darned thing!

Yet in time, with perseverance and no cheating by looking at the keyboard, the use of the typewriter will become so automatic that you will be able to type rapidly without hesitation.

You will have grafted on an extra habit to those inborn in you. The messengers at work between hands and brain through the nervous system will have become immensely skilled in the new special job you have assigned to them and trained them in.

An acquired habit of this nature, like typing, cannot be passed on through heredity. You will remember the biologists' argument about the giraffe's long neck! I wonder whether, if typing were a matter of absolute life and death for our kind, it would come over generations to be hereditary, or not?

Now there are two kinds of nerves, the 'messenger-units' of the body.

One set carries orders to and from the brain in connexion with the special senses – seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. These also work for the carrying out of actions consciously *willed*. This kind of nerve also communicates with the spinal cord (protected within the backbone) for the automatic actions of which we are not conscious. For this purpose, you may regard the brain and the spinal cord as close partners in the same work.

The other set of nerves carries orders for action to the appropriate area of the body.

If we keep our comparison of the brain with a central automatic telephone switchboard, then the first kind of nerve is the main or 'trunk' line, and the second the smaller local extension line.

A 'map' of our nervous system would therefore closely resemble the 'map' of the blood 'goods train'. And do not forget how closely these two services must be related, since it is the bloodstream which carries to all parts of the nervous system the oxygen 'fuel' necessary for it to carry on.

Every action we perform, from the simplest to the most complex, is a result of lightning-swift co-operation between the 'operators' of the 'telephone' system – the special cells which compose the nerves and their connexion with the brain-cells, spinal-cells and muscle-cells all over the body.

The absorbing question of 'personality' – that is to say, not only the difference between my brain and your brain, but between 'me' and 'you' – we will go into in a later chapter.

There are many things we still do not know about the brain. Among them is the nature and extent of the connexion between 'brain' and 'mind', or 'personality' or 'character'.

There are some scientists who say that there is nothing more to us than an immensely complicated mechanism in the brain working in co-operation with the equally complex mechanism of the body.

They would say that if you knew enough about a person's heredity, inherent nature and past experiences, it would be possible to predict exactly what would be their response to any given situation.

Yet mankind has always felt its 'self' to be rather more than just a matter of pushing a button and getting a certain response. Certainly, many exceptional people have

overcome handicaps both physical and mental which would seem to indicate that there may be something more.

Let us accept, at any rate for the moment, the fact that we have at our disposal an extremely delicate machinery of thought and feeling, memory and anticipation.

The wonders of its working are a daily miracle.

Let us, on the other hand, not lose sight of the fact that as between man and man – and man and woman – there is little to choose in the quality of 'brains'. Nor have we yet advanced so tremendously beyond the ape world.

That thought should keep us personally humble, but also hopeful.

There is a wonderful field of evolutionary development still open. More, for the first time in the history of Life, a creature finds itself endowed with the power of taking thought for the advancement of its own evolution.

Other creatures were not able to look ahead even so small a way as we can do. We could, if we so wished, help on the course of evolution in many ways – most importantly, by making a positive attempt to breed out of ourselves the primitive instincts once necessary to survival, but now in some respects an actual menace.

Will mankind choose the higher path, rather than pursue ruin through selfishness?

It is very largely up to you, you know.

CHAPTER X

The glandular system: The glands, and what they do; interaction of body and mind; glandular medicine and surgery

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The glandular system

As we have seen, mind and body cannot be considered separately. Their reactions upon each other are frequent and powerful.

This is not really surprising, since the brain – the instrument of mind – is in fact a part of the body. It is composed of material cells, is fed by the bloodstream, and has for its servants and messengers nerves connected to even the most distant limbs.

In addition, there is also a special set of organs distributed throughout the body, which seem to act the part of go-betweens between body and mind. These are called the ductless glands. Their part in both physical and mental activity is vital.

You have probably heard most about 'glands' when some of the small glands in your neck have swollen through a chill. Usually, however, this is not a very serious matter.

There are two main kinds of glands. One of these kinds includes the sweat-glands to which we have referred in a previous chapter. Their work is certainly important, but not to the extent of the endocrine or ductless glands which are the special ones with which I propose to deal.

There are many gaps in our knowledge of the working of our bodies and minds. There is tremendous scope for new discoveries.

One of the biggest gaps is in our understanding of the

ductless glands. We can say they do this or that, because experiment has shown what happens if this or that gland ceases to work properly. But we do not always know *why* or *how* it is done.

Glands, like the cells of the body, are also chemical 'factories' – highly complicated and very important ones, at that. They manufacture certain special fluids, just as the stomach and intestines do.

Instead of pouring out their product either into any one special organ (like the stomach) or on to the skin (like the sweat-glands) these ductless glands send their fluids directly into the bloodstream, to be carried all over the body.

Co-operation between these glands is extremely important. Although they are situated in quite different places, they affect one another's working – presumably through the bloodstream which connects them all.

They have a 'chief', the most important of them, which also sees that they are working in harmony. This is the pituitary gland. It lies at the base of the brain, directly connected to that part which is believed to influence our emotions.

Small as it is – only half an inch across – the pituitary is vitally important. Its removal would mean that the other ductless glands would cease to work.

The pituitary gland has two parts.

The first governs the growth of our bony structure. If it should work overtime, the person will become a giant. If it should be lazy, the person will be a dwarf. Mental growth may also be affected in either case.

The work of the second part of this gland is less well understood, but it is believed to have close connexion with the development and proper workings of the digestive and reproductive organs.

So it will be seen that mental and physical conditions are to a very great extent dependent upon the normal working of this gland.

The thyroid gland, also in two parts, lies in the base of the neck, in front. Too much enthusiasm in the working of this gland can cause physical illness, and also affect the nature of the person – causing excitability and nervousness which may place great strain upon the vital organs of the body. Laziness on its part may cause a child to be dwarfish or imbecile, or an adult to become sluggish and fat.

It may be interesting here to note that this gland business – and, indeed, the whole question of interaction between body and mind – works both ways.

A person with a too-active thyroid gland will be nervous and jittery. But a person who has been under a terrible strain for a long time may develop trouble with the thyroid gland. We do not really know, so to speak, in these cases, 'which comes first, the chicken or the egg'.

There is a possible explanation, however, when we come to consider the adrenal glands, also twin glands, situated above the kidneys.

One part of these manufactures a fluid called adrenalin, which when it flows into the bloodstream, causes both physical and mental states to be affected. When for any reason we become angry or afraid, the flow of adrenalin increases and we are keyed up, prepared to meet the emergency – both in body and mind.

The blood pressure is affected. The blood may rush to the head, in anger; or from it in fear. The sweat-glands may be affected, causing a perspiration. The heart may beat extra fast to meet the emergency.

Here we may have a clue to the results upon the nervous and digestive systems of mental conditions such as worry.

Continual anxiety may result in excessive production of adrenalin. This too-great flow into the bloodstream, together with nervous tension, may react upon the sensitive organs of the digestive system, causing gastric illness.

The other part of the adrenal glands is even more vital.

It controls the use and disposal of water and salt in the body, and is closely connected with the working of the reproductive glands.

The reproductive or sex glands themselves vary in their position, nature and work, according to whether they exist in a man or a woman.

In both sexes, these glands have two different kinds of products; the special fluids, similar to those of the other ductless glands, which pass directly into the bloodstream; and the female 'egg' or male 'seed' which must come together if a new being is to be formed.

We shall consider these glands in detail in the next chapter, in their place in the Reproductive System.

You may remember that in our survey of the digestive system we saw that the pancreas was one of the 'factories' producing digestive juices. The pancreas has, however, some claim to be considered among the special glands, since it has an additional job similar to that of the rest of the ductless glands.

It produces a fluid called insulin, which regulates the absorption of sugar in the bloodstream. If it is not doing this efficiently, the disease known as diabetes will develop.

There remain three other ductless glands: the parathyroid – another twin gland – the pineal and the thymus.

The parathyroid is situated alongside the thyroid, and assists in the working of the bloodstream and central nervous system.

The pineal projects from the back of the brain. Its use is believed to be to prevent sexual development from going ahead too quickly – for it would obviously be absurd if the gift of sexuality were given to a young child quite unfit to use it.

In fact, many adults are not fit to use it, and this is a matter of such importance that I propose to deal with it more fully later.

The thymus, which lies behind the upper part of the breastbone, is well developed in the child but begins gradually to get smaller, until by the age of about fourteen it has almost vanished. It is believed to have similar duties to the pineal, though we are still ignorant of its exact purpose.

Now you will have noticed, throughout this short review of the Glandular System, two important points.

The first is, the extent to which our knowledge is limited in this particular field. The second is, how vital is the part played by the glands in bringing the human being to full normal development.

Fortunately, we know enough now for children who might otherwise have grown up deformed or idiotic to be treated with specially prepared medicines which will make up for any lack of activity on the part of these more important glands.

In some cases we can also restore to health, by surgery or medicine, adults in whom the working of the glands has for some reason become unbalanced.

But there is still an enormous field open for research and discovery. In fact, scientists exploring this field are just as much pioneers and adventurers as the men who in the past went out in little ships to discover unknown lands. Perhaps even more, since their discoveries can confer lasting benefits upon mankind.

This is the kind of adventure which it may be worth while to consider taking part in, if your interests and aptitudes lie in this direction.

CHAPTER XI

The reproductive system: The sex organs, male and female; the work of the sex glands; male and female seed; what is menstruation?; how man and woman unite; conception and birth; the 'change of life'; sex and pleasure

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The Reproductive System

In discussing the Reproductive System, I am not quite sure where to start. Perhaps the most practical way will be to describe the actual organs, as they exist in male and female, and then go on to the way in which they work.

Before doing so, however, it may be well just to run over the facts we already know: new birth cannot come about except through the union of male and female seed. The joined seed is nourished in the body of the mother during the process of development into a body sufficiently well formed to be born into the world.

That process takes about nine months, and when he is ready, the baby is expelled from the body of the mother to take up his independent life.

The sex organs in a man are simpler than in a woman, because he does not have to be equipped for that nine months' period of development of the child, nor to breast-feed him afterwards.

From the purely physical point of view, the man's part is quite simple: to manufacture the male seed and to introduce it into the body of the woman, where it will meet the female seed.

For this purpose, he is equipped with the twin glands called the testes, or testicles, which hang below the abdo-

men in a little protective bag of skin. From this same bag, and connected with the testicles inside with passages down which the male seed may pass, grows the tube-like penis.

The testicles are the gland-factories which produce two products: one which goes directly into the man's blood-stream like the fluids produced by the other ductless glands; and the other the male 'seed', or sperm.

The penis also has two jobs. It is the means by which the male seed is conveyed into the female body. It also acts, by means of passages connected with the bladder in the lower abdomen, as the vent by which fluid waste passes out of the body.

The glands which in a woman correspond to the male testicles are the ovaries. These, however, are hidden inside her body. They are not so close together as the testicles, but lie some little way apart on each side of the womb in the lower abdomen.

From the ovaries, two tubes pass into the womb, which is the special bed in which the unborn child develops. The only opening of the womb which has contact with the outside of the body is its mouth, which opens into the passage-way between the legs, known as the vagina.

The passageway which leads from the womb to the outside of the body is protected by folds of skin, called the vulva. Here also is the outlet for a special tube from the bladder for the release of the fluid waste of the digestive system.

It seems to me that this arrangement – that is, the nearness of the genital or sexual apparatus to the excretory – has been the cause of much of the false shame we feel about the lower parts of our bodies.

As we shall see later on, while we are children we often get silly ideas. And once a silly idea has got a strong hold in our minds it is very difficult to get it out.

One of these silly ideas, shared by most of us, is that

there is something shameful in the fact of going to the toilet at all. This is of course nonsense, since our bodies would get filthy inside and stop working properly if we did not.

But I think half the false shame we feel about sex arises because the visible sexual organs have this double duty, so that sex and dirt have got mixed up together in ignorant people's minds.

It may be a good thing, before going further, to give a little closer description of the sexual organs.

It is a very natural and healthy thing for young people to be curious about the way in which men and women are made. But it is a bad thing for this curiosity not to be satisfied, because that results in a feeling that there is something wrong or unpleasant about our sex organs. This in turn might well produce feelings of guilt and shame associated with our reproductive system.

The male penis, fully grown, is some inches long, and ordinarily hangs down quite flabbily in front of the testicles. It has, however, the power of becoming erect so that it may enter the female body without difficulty. This comes about as the result of an increased flow of blood to the penis. When this happens, the penis grows longer so as to enable the sperms to be placed as far as possible into the female body.

The female passageway is from three to four inches long. Its lining is not flat, but full of tiny folds of skin and muscle, so that when necessary it can expand enormously to allow the baby to pass out with safety to both mother and child.

The 'mouth' or 'neck' of the womb is a cone-shaped passage about an inch long, while the womb itself is pear-shaped – quite enclosed except for its one opening and the tubes connected to the ovaries – and about two and a half inches long.

Now to go back to the work done by these organs.

The male testicles produce, you will remember, two things: the special product which passes into the bloodstream of the man, and the 'seed' or sperms which are usually kept in the testicles until deposited in the female body – after which a new supply of sperms is made.

The manufacture of these products of course comes into the class of activity which is not controlled by the conscious brain.

The special product, when carried by the bloodstream throughout the body of the man, causes him to have the usual signs by which the male body is recognized: hair on abdomen and chest, beard, deep voice and so on.

The testicles begin their full work when they are sufficiently ready to take it on – that is to say, at the age of about 14. The process is not sudden, but slow, and the years of passing from boyhood to manhood are those usually called 'adolescence'. It is during this time that the male physical changes become fully developed, owing, largely, to the work of the testicles and the other ductless glands.

Every time the man makes the act of depositing his seed into the female body, no less than 50 to 200 *million* sperms are released. This is almost unbelievable, is it not? But remember that they are very tiny, and this number is evidence of Nature's intention to make sure that the race should continue.

Only one sperm can normally fertilize one female seed, so it seems at first sight rather wasteful that such an enormous number should be used up each time. But there may be good reason for this, as well as the 'making sure' part of it.

The sperms have quite a long journey to make, compared to their size, before they reach the female seed. So it may well be that there is a large number of starters in the race for the special reason that the strongest sperm, best fitted to help create a new life, shall be chosen as 'the

winner'. It is also believed that the crowd of sperms may all act upon the wall of the ovum in a kind of 'softening-up' process, before the 'blitz' by the victorious sperm.

Woman does not manufacture her seed in the same way as man does. She is born with some 200,000 seeds ready in the ovaries. Here again we see the extreme thoroughness of Nature's methods.

During her lifetime, whether or not she becomes a mother, a woman makes use of only about 400 seeds. It is possible, too, though we do not know, that in her case also it is the strongest seeds which come into use.

The female seed, or ovum, is also very tiny, being about one one-hundred-and-twentieth of an inch across.

At about the same time as the testicles of a boy begin to become active, so in a girl reaching the age of 13 or so the ovaries begin their work.

Their special product released into the bloodstream stimulates the glands which develop to form the breasts. Some hair grows, though less than in a man, and the general feminine roundness of the body takes shape.

In addition, the ovaries begin to release their seed, at the rate of one a month, sending it down into one of the tubes between them and the womb. It is believed, though not certainly known, that the ovaries take it in turns, one sending down a seed one month, and the other the next.

Meanwhile, the womb itself is stimulated into making a comfortable bed for the development of the baby in preparation for the male sperm should it enter to unite with the female seed.

A specially increased blood supply enriches the lining of the womb, which becomes soft and warm and rich in case this bed should be needed.

Very often, of course, especially in a young girl, this bed is not needed. The male sperm does not come. After waiting a while, the unfertilized ovum passes down into

the womb, rips up the unwanted bed as it goes, and leaves the body through the main passageway. The 'bedding' material together with the extra blood goes with it.

This process is known as menstruation, or the 'monthly period'. It is another of the perfectly natural things about which much nonsense is talked.

So long as ordinary care and cleanliness are seen to, there is nothing disturbing or dangerous about it, and above all its coming is the sign of approaching womanhood.

A certain amount of discomfort cannot always be avoided, but so long as both body and mind are in good condition it should not cause any difficulty.

I mention mind here because, as we shall see towards the end of this chapter, sexual and mental life are very closely bound up together. A girl who through ignorance has not been prepared for the coming of menstruation, or foolishly thinks there is something dreadful about it, may through her mental attitude bring about as a result unnecessary pain for herself.

Half the troubles of childbirth are caused in a similar way. Be unafraid and unashamed, but proud to be indeed a woman, and, accidents apart, this side of your life will be perfectly satisfactory.

Let us now suppose that instead of the female egg passing down and out through the womb and passageway, an act of union occurs with the male sperm.

How is this brought about?

In the first place, there should be a strong desire on the part of both man and woman for this union. This we will go into more fully towards the end of the chapter.

If that desire exists, its satisfaction by the coming-together of man and woman will give them great happiness, both in their emotions and in their bodies.

It is strange to reflect that the things which are quite vital to life and to life's continuance are very pleasurable.

Take eating, for instance. If there were no pleasure in eating, or no corresponding pain attached to being hungry, a creature whose brain had not reasoned out the connexion between food and living would very quickly die.

If a dog found no pleasure in eating and no pain in going hungry, why should it trouble to eat? Life could never have survived at all without this arrangement.

In just the same way, life could not have gone on unless its continuance has been bound up with a sensation of exquisite pleasure. Otherwise creatures might not have bothered to reproduce.

Indeed, so very important is the continuance of living species in Nature's eyes, that she has bound up sexual experience with a far more positive delight than is felt in any other natural process.

So, when an adult man and woman are drawn together by love, their natural instinct is to come as close together as possible. Holding hands is all right, and kissing very nice, but real love wants to get closer than that.

So too does desire without love, as we shall see later on; but for the moment let us take affection as the first impulse of human reproduction, if only for the reason that the best conditions in which a child can be reared are in a home where love is the bond between the parents.

So we have a man and a woman loving each other very much, and wishing to be completely united. The strong feelings of love and desire in them work together with the output into their bloodstreams of the special product of their reproductive glands.

This causes in the man a preparation of the penis to be ready to introduce itself into the woman's body; and in the woman a softening and lubrication of the passageway to receive the penis.

When the penis has entered and the seed is ready to be expelled, it passes through into the body of the woman.

The expulsion of the seed causes for the man the highest point of pleasure. The woman also can reach such a point of joy, though here also, if in her mind there are any foolish fears or false shames, everything may not go as it should and that high point will be missed.

The male sperms, shaped like minute tadpoles, now worm their way up in an exciting race towards the tubes between the womb and the ovaries. When one of them has met and joined the female seed waiting there, the race is over and the other sperms have 'lost'.

The joined seed then makes its way back down the tube into the womb, where the special bed lies waiting for it. There it tucks itself comfortably in, and the process of development into a new life begins.

Of course, for the mother, the matter is not ended there. Neither is it ended for the father in any real sense, since he will have the joy of tending his wife in her months of waiting, and of protecting both her and the child later on.

The fact of being a father can be very important in the development of a man into a wiser and stronger human being; but from the physical point of view his part is ended when conception has taken place.

For the woman, her job has only just begun. It would seem that Nature, realizing how important is the work of a mother, has deliberately left the man free to work and fend for her and for the coming child.

The expectant mother not only nourishes the growing child within her, but with the help of the special product of her reproductive and breast glands prepares against the time when the helpless baby will need to be fed with her milk.

When the time of birth has arrived, the muscles of the mother's abdomen and womb combine to force the baby out through the passageway through which the seed entered. At the same time, of course, the bed in which the baby has been lying breaks up and also comes away.

You will understand, of course, that during the nine months that the child is in the womb, there is no need for menstruation to continue. The extra blood supply all goes to feed the unborn child, and not until the child emerges is the 'bed' inside the womb 'unmade'.

Nature also usually gives the mother a rest from menstruation while she breast-feeds her child. After that, the normal monthly round begins again.

The sex glands of both men and women cease their work some time before the normal span of life is ended. Exactly when, depends upon the constitution of the individual.

In general, we may say that between the ages of 55 and 70 years sexual activity ceases in men. It is not marked by any event except the gradual ceasing of desire and power to perform the act of union.

Woman's sexual life – from the point of view of childbearing – ends earlier. At about 45 years of age, though again this varies with each person, the monthly menstruation becomes irregular and gradually ceases. This is known as the menopause, or 'change of life'.

Woman is still able to perform and to enjoy the act of union after this has happened, nor is there any reason why she should not do so. But with the end of the monthly cycle further childbearing is not possible.

If a woman has lived a healthy life, and has no deep-seated inner fears caused through ignorance or wrong upbringing, there is no reason for her to dread this natural happening.

Now just as the working of the whole Glandular System is bound up with that of the brain, the 'mind', the nerves and the blood, so is the working of the Reproductive System closely connected with all these.

Especially, it is intimately related to our mental and emotional states.

It is quite possible for pleasure to be found in the act of

union between man and woman without love existing between them. On the other hand, so closely is this physical act connected with our emotional well-being, that it is a sin against ourselves – rather than in any other sense – to use our sexual powers for mere pleasure where no other motive exists.

I am speaking now of the mature adult. For younger persons there are other reasons why society does not sanction sexual experience immediately we gain our reproductive powers.

This question will be gone into more fully later on.

Meanwhile, I want you just to bear in mind the fact that since our bodies and minds react upon one another, we should not for our own sakes indulge the one at the expense of the other.

Rather we should try to maintain a balance and harmony between them, in just the way that Nature maintains balance and harmony between the varied and complicated organs which work together for our well-being.

CHAPTER XII

Where you come in: Who are you?; brain, mind and character – *How can we find out what mind is?* – *Mind and behaviour:* – *Creating a new science:* Psychology, its origins and usefulness

—

Where you come in

Now I do not know exactly how much of the first section of this book you have read, because it is not meant so much to be a book for reading straight through – but rather to dip into here and there as your daily life brings you into contact with one question or another.

The first section covers a general study of the distant past. I have tried to trace with you the way in which life developed on the earth. This led quite naturally to a description of the physical equipment of mankind, because ours is the most complicated form of life which has yet come into being.

Even if you have followed me closely, do not think there is not still a great deal left unexplained. Volumes and volumes would be needed to tell you everything we know about the past of our world and our kind.

I know very well that I have left a lot out, but even that can serve some good purpose – if it sends you in search of wider reading to fill in the many gaps.

So now, from the wider questions of the world we live in and the life of which we are part, we narrow down to a closer look at YOU.

We know now *what* you are: one member of the human race, and the product of millions of years of development. Now the further question arises, *Who* are you?

In other words, how do you know you are you? What is it that seems to set you apart from others, closely though you belong to them? What makes you feel, deep inside, 'I am myself'?

For it is obviously not enough to say it is only your looks or appearance that distinguishes you from others.

To a certain extent, that is an elementary distinction. It is amazing that, within the pattern of the human body, Nature creates such a variety of designs that it is thought extraordinary if two people resemble each other really closely!

You certainly have a face of your own, which, even if it is not likely to launch a thousand ships, is at any rate yours. But if you think about it a little, you will realize that it is something quite different from looks which sets you apart from others.

Each of us feels that we have a separate 'self'.

It is rather difficult to determine just exactly what that 'self' is, even though each of us knows what we mean by it.

You may call it 'soul' or 'character' or 'mind' – as distinct from its instrument, the brain, which is simply an immensely complicated machine.

Of course the words 'soul', 'character', and 'mind' each carry a slightly different shade of meaning. On the whole, however, they do express this 'self' of whose existence each of us is so fully conscious.

Yet what is it?

There are men who think it is nothing more than the sum total of the mechanical activities of the brain. Others think it is brain PLUS the mysterious spark which is withdrawn at death. You will have heard of the great philosophers, men who thought deeply about the 'soul' – what and where it is, whether or not it is immortal, and so on.

Still, to-day, the question is unsolved, and learned men continue to explore it.

In the end, each of us must settle this question for himself. We may either choose to accept the teaching of one of the Churches, or to do our best to arrive at our own conclusions.

The question is so vast, and opinions upon it so very different, that in recent years many thinkers have decided to approach it from another angle. Leaving aside for the time being the question of 'soul', they have tried first to investigate the nature of the mind.

For it is the difference of your *mind* – using that word to express the *character* working through the *brain* and resulting in *beliefs* and *actions* – from all other minds, which distinguishes Y O U from other people.

How can we find out what mind is?

Now it is obviously not going to be easy to set about finding out exactly what the mind is, and how it works.

Certainly, each of us has a strong feeling that we are not merely body and brain, but also a distinct 'personality' – related to but different from everybody else.

But where can we start?

Goodness knows there is still a great deal we do not understand in connexion with the body – and yet we can weigh and photograph the body. We can even study its various parts separately, and carry out endless experiments and tests.

None of these things can be done with the mind.

We can, it is true, weigh, photograph and dissect the brain. This can be done most completely with a dead brain, and to a limited extent while it is still part of a living body.

But will cutting up a dead brain help us to find the mind? Or is the surgeon operating on the living brain likely to

find the thoughts inside? Unfortunately, the whole thing is much more complicated than that.

So far as the actual brain is concerned, great advances are being made in our knowledge every day. It has been discovered that in activity the brain sends out waves, rather like wireless waves. An instrument called an encephalograph has recently been invented which can measure and record these waves – in much the same way as the seismograph makes a chart of earthquake vibrations.

We have even got so far that we can tell by looking at the record of the brain-'waves' whether or not changes are taking place in the brain-cells which might give rise to abnormal thought and behaviour.

But this line of research still does not bring us much nearer to solving the question: What is the mind, and how does it work?

Mind and behaviour

If one kind of inquiry gets us no further, we must try another. That applies to all life's problems, both of thought and of action. If we cannot get from the brain to the mind and so to behaviour, we must start at the other end, and see where that gets us.

Perhaps, by reasoning back from people's actions, we can get at the nature of their minds.

For though people may try to conceal their real nature by lies and hypocrisy, yet their actions, as the proverb says, speak louder than words. Their habitual behaviour tells us what they really are, as distinct from what they may pretend or want to be.

For reasons which will be explained later, there is in each of us a not-so-good self. With proper knowledge and training, we can get this under control, though sometimes

extraordinary conditions, like war or starvation, will let it loose again.

A person who has really had everything bitterly against him in the early years of his life, when character is formed, may never have got it under control at all. He is 'spoiled', so far as living a useful life in the world is concerned. What has happened to his mind comes out in his behaviour.

In recent years there has been a lot talked and written about a new science called 'psychology'. This means simply understanding of the working of the mind, gained through the study of behaviour.

This naturally interests me a great deal, because it is my own particular branch of work. I hope I shall be able to make it just as interesting to you, because some knowledge of it can be very useful to you in living your life.

On the other hand, I have got to keep watch for a pitfall. When you care a lot about a subject, especially when you work at it every day, you become inclined to think as if it were the only thing that mattered in the world. You get a bit swelled-headed about it, too, especially when new discoveries are made which seem never to have been known before.

So I feel I had better say here and now that although we know a lot about psychology, there is far more we still do not know. What is even more humbling – and therefore healthy for me to keep in mind – is to realize how much wise men knew about it even thousands of years ago.

It is true that only in recent years have people tried to apply the scientific method of study, experiment and proof to human behaviour. But although they may not have used this method, people like Socrates, Aristotle, and the old Greek dramatists Aristophanes and Euripides, showed in their writings very accurate knowledge of what to-day we should call 'psychology'.

In every age there have been men of great insight into

the workings of human nature: Jesus Christ, Chaucer, Montaigne, De Rochefoucauld, Shakespeare and many others. Some of them seem to have had a kind of instinctive knowledge of human reactions. They arrived at this by intuition rather than by scientific methods.

We scientific men plod on behind them, trying to record tested results and work out from them the laws of human behaviour.

Creating a new science

It was not until the last century that a group of men, scattered all over the world, tried to do this systematically.

I think you will see why this is necessary.

It is true that certain great men, with special powers of perception, do know because of the sensitiveness of their own minds, how people think and feel and react in times of emotional stress.

I will try to show you what I mean.

You have probably read *Hamlet*. You may have read it in class. If not, I do recommend you to have a shot at reading it for yourself.

Of course, I know that Shakespeare's work may have been made to sound very dull because you *were* made to read it in class. Lots of people lose a great deal of fun because they are made to hate the work of the great writers by having it forced down their throats at an early age.

If they could only get themselves, later on, to read these writers for pleasure, they would usually see at once how much they had been missing, just because of a natural prejudice caused by silly teaching.

Anyway, Hamlet is a thoughtful and rather studious young man, who has been very much upset by the fact that his dearly-loved mother has married his dead father's brother, whom he does not like very much.

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Anyway, Hamlet is a thoughtful and rather studious young man, who has been very much upset by the fact that his dearly-loved mother has married his dead father's brother, whom he does not like very much.

On top of that, his father's ghost appears to him and tells him that the uncle murdered him, and it is up to Hamlet to take revenge. (In those days, of course, people believed in revenge. We have grown out of that, but for the sake of the story you have to look at things from the point of view that revenge is right and proper.)

Now Hamlet is in a fix. On the one hand is hatred of the wicked uncle and love for his father, and the pain of seeing his mother married to the murderer – and wondering if she knows.

On the other is Hamlet's own nature, which is gentle and bookish. He is not a man of action, like Laertes, the brother of the girl he is in love with. He does not want to kill anybody.

Because he does not want to, he tells himself that perhaps his own melancholy nature has caused him to have delusions – perhaps the ghost was not his father at all, but the Devil trying to lead him into the sin of murder.

Throughout the play, until circumstances force his hand, Hamlet is fighting this inner battle with himself. I like to think, too, that because he was so intelligent and in advance of his time, he himself had an idea that revenge was barbarous and wrong.

Anyway, the point I want to bring out now is that as we read *Hamlet* we *feel* that Shakespeare was right in making him delay his revenge until too late.

Given the character of Hamlet as Shakespeare shows it to us, he *could not* dash into revolt and murder with the decision that, say, Laertes would have shown in similar circumstances and did in fact show after Hamlet had accidentally killed Laertes' father and caused the suicide from grief of his sister.

We *feel* that Hamlet's character and Hamlet's actions in emergency 'hang together'. Shakespeare *felt* it too, or he

would not have written the play. Being unusually sensitive, he would always be correct in the pictures he made of human behaviour – very probably without knowing why.

But geniuses who 'feel' these things so vividly and accurately are rare. Ordinary men need guidance if they are to work out, more laboriously, the same conclusions.

It will obviously be of tremendous benefit to all humanity if we can discover exactly why people behave as they do, and the way in which the workings of their minds prompt behaviour. Bad behaviour – that is, actions harmful both to the person concerned and to society – can then be prevented before, and not merely after, the event.

The question then arises: where were these men to start in their investigation of the mind and human behaviour?

The mind, as distinct from the brain, cannot be analysed or experimented upon. If you could cut out a thought from the brain, lay it on a glass slide and put it under the microscope – as you can do with a cell of brain material – then you would get somewhere!

There would be no question as to what it was, and how it behaved.

But you cannot do that. It is not possible, except in the most elementary stages of mind science, to prove your conclusions. A psychologist may be very sure, from his experience, that in a given situation the mind of a certain person will react in a certain way – but how can he really *prove* that to another scientist or anyone else, if the given situation should not arise?

Where scientific proof of a thing is not possible, then wide differences of opinion are likely to arise among those investigating it. That, in fact, is what has happened with the new science.

To-day there is more than one 'school' of psychology – 'school' meaning here not an educational establishment, but a *group* of men holding certain views and theories which

they share, by contrast with other groups with rather different ideas.

Some psychologists have come to think that one motive is strongest in human behaviour; others emphasize another. Who is to say who is right? There is plenty of scope here for fresh young minds to clear up some of the muddles which have arisen!

There were two possible ways for the investigators to begin their work.

1. They could study by the scientific method of experiment and conclusion the working of the special senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
2. They could each look into his own mind, watch its workings and note his own resulting behaviour.

The second method could be extended into study of other people's minds, where those people were willing and able to give a full report of what went on in their innermost thoughts and of even their most secret behaviour.

Now you will quickly see, if you think for a moment, that both these methods are rather faulty. To use either will be like using a foot-rule which is only eleven and a half inches long and pretending that its length is true.

It will obviously be helpful to explore the workings of the senses. The Russian scientist, Pavlov, did some good work in this direction.

He made the experiment of ringing a bell every time food was given to a dog. When the idea had become firmly set in the dog's brain that the sound of the bell was connected with food, it was sufficient just to ring the bell without producing the food, for the dog's mouth to begin to water.

A special record had been made in the dog's brain, or rather its mind, that the sound of the bell meant food.

But interesting as the results of such experiments can be,

to try to trace the workings of the mind through the special senses alone comes to a full stop at the most interesting point. For you cannot in this way reach the deeper thoughts and feelings not directly connected with the senses.

So we come to the second possible method: looking into oneself. This also has a grave disadvantage, for who among us is so clear-sighted that with the best will in the world he will acknowledge even to himself exactly what goes on inside him?

We all tend to be blind to facts about ourselves which we do not want to face. In fact, what knowledge we have gained of the human mind teaches us exactly that: we are always inclined to see things as we want to see them rather than as they are. Each of us has a darling 'blind spot' when it comes to our own shortcomings.

I will give you a simple example from my own childhood, which may resemble some incident of your own.

I was not a very good child. At that time it worried me, and I was convinced in my secret heart that I was about as bad as I could be. Now, of course, I know that I was just going through stages of growth that everyone has to go through.

One day my father told me to do something or other – I forget what, but it must have been something I hated then – and my resentment against him was so bitter that I sat in my chair by the fireplace holding the poker and feeling that I could have killed him.

That is of course the most primitive of reactions. Mankind is still only learning by gradual stages that killing other human beings is silly, as well as wrong. It solves nothing, and it is a crime against the right of others to live, which they have equally with ourselves.

It is most unlikely that in fact I would have attacked my father. But the wish was definitely there.

Now suppose that one of these scientific investigators we

have been talking about had come by just then; and suppose he had asked me what I was feeling? I should never have told. I can only tell now because I have got those primitive feelings under control, have faced them and got rid of them, together with the sense of guilt they caused in me.

Still more important, I should not have admitted to *my-self* what was in my heart – because of course even then I knew it was a wrong thought – and to have faced the fact of such badness in myself would have made me very ashamed.

So we tend, all of us, all our lives – even the finest and most clear-sighted of us – to forgive ourselves our own sins instead of asking to have them forgiven.

Because all men share this human failing the inquirer who uses himself as his own material in investigating the mind is bound to get results which are not quite accurate.

So we come to the extension of that method; relying upon another person's report of his intimate thoughts and private actions.

Here we are up against much the same difficulty. For the person concerned, too, however honest in his intention, shares the same human failing. To rely upon his report will be like reading letters in which a lot has been crossed out or slightly altered while passing through a strict censor-ship.

Those are the difficulties in the way of gaining really accurate knowledge of the way the human mind works, and why people act as they do. Yet it is highly important that we should come to understand these things. So what is to be done?

When conditions, in work or in life, are not as we would wish them to be, we have to make the best of them. That is probably life's strongest lesson.

So, about the middle of the last century, the men working on this subject started to use both these methods, while

doing their honest best to remember the limitations of both of them.

As a result, a German, Wilhelm Wundt, and an American, William James, published books telling what they had discovered. These books formed the groundwork of the new science of mental medicine, psychology.

The most famous explorer in this field in recent times was Sigmund Freud, who very greatly enlarged our knowledge of the subject.

You will remember, however, that as I said earlier, psychology cannot be an exact science because you cannot prove it by weighing and measuring and making really precise experiments. The findings of those engaged in this work are liable to a certain extent to be blurred by their own personal feelings and prejudices.

So differences of opinion arose between Freud and his two best-known fellow-students, Adler and Jung. Freud gave it as his opinion that the greatest single motive in human thought and behaviour was sex. Adler and Jung, while agreeing that it was very important, thought that self-preservation and self-assertion were at least equal, if not greater, factors.

You may wonder why I have gone into all this. What does it matter to me, you may say, whether these old professors disagreed or not? And if they did disagree, what use can I make of the knowledge they left us, not knowing who was right, after all?

My reason for giving you these details has been that I think you should realize the difficulties we are up against in trying to place our knowledge of the human mind upon the same exact basis as our knowledge of the human body – though even there, there are gaps enough in what we know.

As for our second question, I think it so very important that we will deal with it fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

What we do know about the mind: How the mind-scientist works – *Where we are different and where we are alike:* Are you 'normal'? – *How self-knowledge can be useful:* Your chance to 'straighten' yourself – *Nowhere and everywhere:* Punishment or cure?; shortsighted parents

—

What we do *know about the mind*

So Freud says one thing, and Jung another, while Adler's off on a road of his own! That looks rather bad for us ordinary people who simply want an answer to a simple question: What is the mind, and how does it work?

Well, in the first place we have got to face the fact that we cannot have a simple answer. After all, that is not so very surprising, when you think how complicated even the most ordinary human being usually turns out to be.

Nor can we have an exact answer, for the reasons I have given you. Nor an all-embracing answer, because there is so much still to be found out.

What we can do, though, is to find the Highest Common Factor in the knowledge given by the different scientists.

Highest Common Factor! you may say. *Oh Lord!*

I must admit that after all these years since I went to school I had to think twice to make sure it was not Lowest Common Denominator I meant.

In plain words, the best thing for us to do is to follow the mind-scientists in those things on which they all agree, and leave them to argue out the details.

They may all be wrong, but it is unlikely. If, working by their different methods, they have all reached certain

conclusions, even though they differ on the deeper points, then I think we can safely accept those conclusions and make them the basis of our study of the mind.

I should like to explain to you in more detail one of the methods by which our knowledge has been reached, because it is one by which much good work has been done.

You will remember that I mentioned as one possibility the co-operation with the mind-scientist of a person 'able and willing' to report his own most secret thoughts and actions.

The objection, of course, was that he probably would not give an accurate report.

It is possible, however, if the person concerned will help to the fullest extent, for a really experienced mind-scientist to get him to tell very nearly the whole truth about himself.

For this, he must of course be willing to give up all the usual defences. He must not only not deceive the mind-scientist, but also learn not to deceive himself.

As you will imagine, this is not very easy, especially at first. But a method has been gradually built up to help the person do this, and to help the mind-scientist to piece together all the fragments of information given him.

This method is called *psycho-analysis*.

People talk quite lightly about this to-day, as if being psycho-analysed – as the process of talking with the mind-scientist is called – were something quite simple or easy.

There is nothing frightening about it, though I admit it is a horrid-looking word.

You simply lie completely relaxed and, without thinking of anything definite, relate whatever thought or feeling comes into your mind.

Owing to his training, the mind-scientist is able to trace these thoughts and feelings to their source in happenings which have deeply affected your life.

If you are really relaxed, and your ordinary mental defences are down, you will after a number of interviews be able to recall many things you thought you had forgotten.

As you make friends with him, and come to trust in his guidance, the mind-scientist may be able to show you the way in which these long-'forgotten' things have had a deep – and sometimes harmful – influence on your whole outlook.

So it is that he often helps unhappy people back to happiness, and useless ones back to usefulness – by showing them what is wrong and how to put it right.

But though it is nothing frightening, psycho-analysis is not to be regarded lightly. There is something in us – self-love, if you like – which fights so deeply against the truth about ourselves that it is often a bitter struggle before it is overcome.

The thing for you to do, at your time of life, is to get your mind and character going along the right lines now, and then such a drastic step will never be necessary in later years. That is one of my objects in writing this for you now.

The science of psychology has two uses:

1. It can widen our knowledge of the way in which the human mind works; and, therefore,
2. It can help people whose minds or characters have got 'twisted' through unhappy experiences to overcome their disadvantages.

I want you to understand that we are not talking now of actual mental disease. Because I speak of a mind being 'twisted', that does not imply insanity. All our minds get 'twisted' a tiny bit, this way or that, by everything that happens to us.

Mental disease is quite another question. Our understanding of it is gradually widening, and it is a matter which must be left entirely in the hands of the qualified medical men.

The matter we have now in mind is the gaining of a 'quiet spirit' in each human being. Harmony, contentment, understanding of oneself and of others should be our aim.

If you want any proof that this is sadly lacking in most people, you have only to look at the general mess of the world to-day. For the troubles of the world are only a reflection of the upheavals and discontents in the minds of the people who make up that world.

We are all parts of a whole, remember! Just as the whole body is affected and infected if one part is diseased, so with life. Whatever our religious beliefs, we cannot but agree with the deep wisdom of the words: *Ye are all members one of another*. That is true of the whole universe, and everything in it.

Where we are different and where we are alike

You may be wondering how this new mind-science can be useful to the 'normal' person, especially the normal young person like yourself.

The answer to that is that there is no 'normal' person, if by that you mean a person of a certain definite fixed standard of intelligence or character.

The whole fascination of the world of human beings is that each one is quite different from the next – though perhaps *quite* is too strong a word here. Let us say rather that we are all alike, and all unlike.

All life is one, and yet each separate offshoot of life is stimulating and excitingly different.

After all, what is this 'normal'? If you call any one

person normal, everyone else is going to be wrong to some extent. We all vary from a 'normal' which exists only in theory.

It may help to think of the 'normal' as a kind of Equator – an imaginary line which we know does not exist in fact, but whose pretended existence helps as a kind of measure.

Each of us is at a different distance from the Equator, even if it is only by a few inches – for it is one of Nature's laws that two bodies cannot occupy the same position in space.

In just the same way, each of us is at a different distance from the 'normal' in character and mind – on one side or other of it. So long as we do not get too far away – to the Poles, so to speak – that is all to the good and makes for interesting living.

But, just as we all have the same ground under our feet, near or far from the Equator, so in our minds and characters there are certain basic tendencies which are the same in all of us.

These have been carefully worked out, tested and recorded by those who study the human mind. On these things, the various 'schools' of mind-scientists are agreed, so we may safely accept them.

Briefly summarized, they are as follows:

1. The reactions of all human beings are similar, in that they follow certain definite trends. These trends are sometimes called instincts: urges towards self-preservation, self-assertion, reproduction, companionship and knowledge, etc.
2. The reactions of one human being are different from another's. The reason is that in him the working of the common trends is modified by a different heredity and a different experience.
3. All experience, even events which seem trivial to

others, can have deep and long-lasting effect on the mind.

4. It is at the very time when most people think a child is not 'taking notice' of what is happening around it that the deepest impressions are made on its mind, for good or evil in its future life.
5. These impressions appear in many cases to be forgotten, but in fact sink deep into the mind, to have lasting effects upon future behaviour. This applies to both happy and sad memories. In practice, however, it is usually the happy memories we remember best. The sad or shameful ones we push into the 'back of our minds'. As you will see later, the greater the effort we have put into forgetting them, the more powerful they become in the hidden places of our minds and the greater effect they have upon the development of our character.

I want you to stop reading for a moment and think for a little about these five points, which I have tried to arrange in such a way that they follow logically one from the other.

Now, having considered these facts, can you see the use to which we can put them?

Suppose people going on through life – as I am afraid the great majority do – knowing nothing of these things. What will be the result?

If they do not understand how much past experience may have 'twisted' their mind and character, they will not be able to gain full control of their own thoughts and actions. They will not know why their minds work in the particular way they do. Where the results, in their behaviour, are undesirable, they will not know how to prevent them.

You can change a thing only when you understand its cause. Until people understand the causes of their behaviour, they will not be free beings but only the slaves of

the various small mishaps which happen to them on the road of life.

How self-knowledge can be useful

The last section is a very general summing-up of the mind-science which we can accept as beyond reasonable criticism. There are many books available to you which deal with the subject in more detail if you are sufficiently interested.

I myself do not want to discuss it with you in a text-book way. From the bare outline I have given you, however, I think you will now begin to see what I am driving at, and why I have raised the subject at all.

This is a book intended to be helpful to young people.

Young people have in most cases undergone less than older people through the mere fact of fewer years – though it need not always be so, I know. Their minds and characters are still growing, as indeed they should throughout life; but owing to their youth there has been less opportunity to become malformed or 'twisted' than in the case of older people who have had a longer experience.

Young people are also nearer to their childhood years and can remember early experiences more vividly than older persons. They can therefore come closer to understanding why they have developed in certain ways. This will help them to set about making good any undesirable development of which they may become aware.

Young people still have the greater part of their lives before them, so they are the ones who can benefit most by learning to understand themselves. This will give them the means to guard against unhealthy reactions to future events, and prevent themselves being warped by either failure or success – for too much of either can be dangerous – in emotional and business affairs.

So if you are going to develop into a useful and happy person, now is the time to start taking stock of yourself, see where you may have gone wrong, and make an effort to put things right.

For one thing, it is not at all easy to pass out of childhood and into adult life. It is a difficult process which sometimes takes years to get through satisfactorily. But if you understand what is happening inside yourself and inside other people, it will become a lot easier.

I think the most satisfactory way to make a summary of the things that happen to most people, and the results they can have, will be to take step by step the story of your own life from babyhood to the present time.

Gee-whizz, you may be thinking, the man's a wizard, if he thinks he is going to tell me everything that has happened in my life, when we have never even met.

No, I am afraid I do not know any spells, and my job is going to be made very difficult by the fact that I do not know you. In fact, I feel rather as if I were talking through a wall, with you on the other side.

All I can do is to make notes of some of the common worries and troubles which afflict most of us during childhood and early life. Some of the notes will probably be about things that have not worried you – but you must not mind that, because they may be helpful to someone else, so I have got to put them in.

On the other hand, some particular problem which has bothered you may get left out. That will not mean that others have not been troubled with it too, but just that I have forgotten it for the moment.

If we try to make a general picture of how most people develop, you will see how the new mind-science, psychology, has come to be built up.

Where you find something noted down which corresponds to events in your own life, and your reactions to

them, you will realize more and more not only where psychology is a true science, but also the way in which self-knowledge can be useful to you.

If it has any value – and I deeply believe it has – it will help you to 'straighten' out any little kinks of character which may have developed in you through your personal experience.

It may be that such difficulties are standing in the way of your development into a well-balanced, contented and useful person. They may even prevent you reaching real understanding with your family and those around you.

If there is friction, neither you nor those near you will be happy, since you and they react upon each other all the time and are part of each other's experience.

Even if your trouble is only something so very ordinary and widespread as blushing when you go into a room, or being tongue-tied when you are introduced to someone you do not know, I hope to be able to help you.

Nowhere and everywhere

Finding myself using that word 'straighten' just now has reminded me of that very clever and penetrating writer Samuel Butler.

He lived at the end of last century, but his ideas were brilliantly in advance of his time. He wrote, among other books, one called *Erewhon.*

Do you notice that the word *Erewhon* is an anagram for 'Nowhere'? That is to say, the letters of the one word form the other word if you rearrange them.

This book is a very amusing but also very biting satire on our civilization, in which machines have become so important that they seem almost to rule it.

A satire, by the way, is a work which sets up a wildly

exaggerated example in order to prove a reasonable point. Some of the funniest but wisest books have been written in this form.

In *Erewhon* Butler imagines a country where physical illness is a crime, while what we would call crime is treated as illness.

The respectable father of a family, who had embezzled money from his employers, was not sent to prison. He was handed over to the family 'straightener', or 'mind-doctor', whose business it was to find out what twist in his mind could have induced him to go off the rails in this fashion, and to cure it.

Of course, Butler did not intend to say seriously that illness should be treated as a crime, although up to a point he was right where illness results through people's own neglect or folly.

He was using this extreme turning-inside-out of things to bring home to his readers how cruel is much of our usual harsh judgement – for often the reason for wrong-doing lies in injury to the offender's mind, which has become in a sense 'deformed'.

That is not to say that wrong-doing should not be punished.

There are three reasons why in this world punishment is necessary:

1. Especially with children, if just punishment follows on wrong-doing offenders may learn that the effect is connected with the cause, and give up doing wrong.
2. In human society, the punishment of an offender may be an example from which others may profit.
3. Punishment by law is better than private revenge. If it did not exist, people might try to take matters

into their own hands, which would lead to a state of anarchy and violence.

Punishment would not be needed, and a very great deal of crime could be prevented, if people's minds did not get 'deformed' in the process of living.

Crime is, however, on the whole, rather the exception than the rule. We are concerned now with the million small miseries, injustices, unkindnesses and misunderstandings with which people daily make their own and other people's lives miserable.

Crime touches most of our lives only rarely. Muddle and spite, and just plain lack of understanding, touch us all every day. Yet most of it need not exist, if only people had some knowledge how to set about 'straightening' themselves.

So shall we have a shot at tracing from the beginning a typical life, with the mischances which may happen to it? In that way we may find some indications how we may best 'help ourselves'.

Not only will this be useful to you in your own life; it should also help you later on, when you have children of your own, to understand, train and help them.

It is natural, I know, for children to rebel against authority and want to strike out on their own. Just as well it is so, or nothing new would ever be done. But make no mistake about it, parents and teachers can use their greater experience of life to help the children, if there is understanding and goodwill on both sides.

In some parents, I fear, though the goodwill is there, the understanding is lacking. Where they have not kept up with the times, they tend to repeat the mistakes which their own parents made in dealing with them.

They have forgotten what they themselves suffered, and the extreme bitterness of childish miseries. They do not

realize the twists made in their own characters by their own well-intentioned but shortsightedly strict parents.

Then they wonder why their children drift away from them and do not come to them for advice.

Remember always that parents are human beings. As such, they have both strengths and weaknesses. If the weaknesses are in the direction of mishandling their children, accept the fact with understanding and take care to appreciate their strengths – their genuine love and care for you.

Psychology is, after all, a new science. Parents who have not learned it either from books or from experience will tend to be, as it were, grown-up children – reacting to events without knowing why.

The parents must be willing to learn the lessons of parenthood. At the same time, the child too must be willing to accept reasoned guidance based on longer experience.

If parents and children gain some understanding of how each other's minds work, there will be real confidence between them. The parent will not be unduly critical or expect too much from the half-developed being in his care. The child will be prepared to accept necessary restrictions and take advice.

I was rather amused to find a reference to these things in a novel, *Contarini Fleming*, written by Disraeli while he was a very young man, no doubt with still vivid memories of his own childhood.

The hero of the book describes a 'wigging' given to him by his step-mother:

> 'In this silly, superficial way she went on for some time, repeating dull axioms by rote, and offering to me the same useless advice that had been equally thrown away upon the tender minds of her generation.'

The interesting part, to me, is the last half of the sentence.

Disraeli, out of his understanding of human beings, had grasped the point – that this parent was repeating the mistakes of her own parents before her.

So while you look into yourself, remember the tremendous power for good or evil which will be yours in the future.

Much of what you are has been determined by your home training. For what your children become, you will be very largely responsible.

With ever-widening circle, your influence will spread through them to all with whom they come in contact; just as it does now directly from you to all near you.

We are indeed all members one of another.

Shall it be for good?

CHAPTER XIV

What we do know about the mind (ii): The 'trio' of your mental 'concert'; when one player gets out of control; the scarred marrow; the memory lumber-chest; inherited instincts

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What we do know about the mind (ii)

I know I promised you in the last chapter that we would go through your life so far stage by stage, and probably you are waiting to see what sort of an effort I shall make of it.

But I think, first of all, it would help us to get things clear in our minds if I added one more big set of facts to the things we have already seen that all the mind-scientists are agreed on.

That is, a brief description of the 'parts' of which our minds are made up.

You will have to take it on trust, for the moment, without proof; though I hope that you will find some proof when we start going over the life-history of the average child.

The biggest proof there can be, anyway, will be if you are able to recognize that these are indeed the things which go on inside you.

Do not think, because I said '*parts* of the mind', just now, that I meant anything as definite as, say the 'parts' of an engine. We are not now, you remember, dealing with the brain, which can be actually physically divided into parts.

When I say 'parts of the mind', I mean something much less definite – something which cannot be divided. It may help if we compare them to a *trio* in music. Piano, violin,

and cello each play their separate 'parts', which make the music as a whole.

So remember, in talking of 'parts of the mind' we mean something like that – which cannot be cut, which make up a whole, and – and here I am afraid the music comparison breaks down – which play all together, and never alone.

What do you mean when you speak of your 'mind'?

I expect you will say, 'What you think with'.

Up to a point, that is true – but it is not the whole truth.

The part of you which says in itself, 'I am Mary Jones, a very nice girl', or the part you use when you concentrate on your homework, or which wants very much to go to the pictures instead of doing homework at all – that part is the *conscious* mind.

We are all aware of its existence in ourselves.

There are, however, other parts of the mind, of which we are usually not aware. They are very powerful in us for all that.

There is the *unconscious* mind, for instance – the filing-cabinet of memory. In it there are some very deep drawers indeed. There we bury hurtful or shameful memories which we prefer – without admitting the fact even to ourselves – to forget.

There is also the '*hereditary memory*', which is part of the unconscious mind. We are still far from understanding how this works. It seems, however, to come about in a manner similar to that in which we inherit the physical and mental traits of our ancestors. Our minds seem to inherit the sum, though not the details, of all the memories of the generations which have gone before us.

So you will see that what we call 'the mind' is a very remarkable thing. It has been compared to an iceberg, because only part of an iceberg is seen above the sea. The rest, the larger part, is under the surface.

Our minds, too, have hidden depths, as well as the upper part of which we are aware.

Now each of these different parts of the mind has its special use. Nature has not, remember, made anything which has not some purpose.

The trouble is that most people do not even know about the 'lower' layers of their own minds, let alone have any idea how to use them.

If you advise someone to find out how their mind works or to get proper control of their mind, they will think you are being very rude and trying to make out they are crazy. Yet these will probably be the very first people to say – and quite rightly – that you should learn how to understand and control the workings of your body.

It is just as necessary to learn to regulate your mind as it is to stand up straight or breathe through your nose – indeed, I think it is infinitely more so.

Do not think, though, that learning proper control of the mind is anything like as easy as standing up straight. Remember, it is only the upper, conscious part of the mind which is 'logical' and capable of reason.

The unconscious part is not logical at all. Often it is responsible for our doing things which our 'better selves' would never have sanctioned. When it does take the lead in the mind *trio*, it does so swiftly and powerfully, drowning the other partners.

This is an example of the way it works.

A child was made to feel that his mother did not love him – as in fact in this exceptional case she did not. As a result – so as not to be hurt by giving love which would not be returned – he reacted by not loving her.

In adult years, even after his mother was dead, this reaction went on. It became transferred from just his mother to everybody in general, and women in particular.

Naturally, he was unhappy himself and made others unhappy. In short, he became a woman-hater and was unable to marry and make a home for himself and others.

Now obviously, if the unconscious mind were logical and capable of reasoning, he could have worked out for himself that by reacting in the way he did he was only storing up misery and unhappiness for the future.

If as a child he could have known what the effect would be upon his whole future life, he might have brought himself to accept the fact of his mother's lack of love for him, and been glad later to give and receive love in the normal way.

But because the child was sensitive, and pushed down inside himself his unsatisfied longing for love without admitting to himself what was wrong – the 'memory filing-cabinet' works got jammed up. Later on, when he met other women, the unconscious mind in its unreasonable way pushed up the bad memory so that he fastened the old feelings of unhappiness on to these other women.

If you find this difficult to understand, let us take a homely illustration, which may help to show you how bad memories scar the mind.

If you have ever grown marrows in the garden at home, you have perhaps sometimes chosen a sturdy little marrow and cut your initials on it with a match-stick.

If so, you know that as surely as the marrow grows, so does the scar grow too. It gets fainter in appearance, but much larger in extent, by the time the marrow is ready for cutting.

In just the same way, marks on the mind – and particularly on the young mind – remain. They may heal over and get fainter (that is, get pushed down into the unconscious mind) but their sphere of influence grows.

Now the marrow has no power to blot out its scar entirely. But we can have power, if we work for it, to see that

our mental scars do not exert a harmful influence on our lives.

That is what I mean by learning to look into yourself and know *why* you think and act as you do.

If you think about it enough, you may find that some of your own thoughts and actions are caused by your unconscious, not your conscious mind. That is to say, they are unreasonable, and result from quite small hurts you may have received when younger. If you can trace back the reasons, you will be one step nearer to gaining full control of your mind.

You may be thinking to yourself, 'Dear me. This unconscious mind causes a great deal of trouble. What is the use of it?'

Well, as I said before, there is nothing in Nature which has not its usefulness.

The unconscious mind serves the very good purpose of a store-chest or filing-cabinet. Nothing we experience is ever quite lost. It is recorded and tucked neatly away in the unconscious mind.

For if every one of our memories were in the forefront of our minds – that is, the conscious, or 'upper level' – it would be so cluttered up that it would be like an overstocked cupboard where you cannot lay hands on the thing you want.

For the purposes of daily life it is very useful to have immediately useful things in the conscious mind, and the rest in reserve in the unconscious. So long as each serves its purpose, well and good.

Harm arises when some painful memory is pushed down into the filing-cabinet extra hard – extra hard because we *want* to forget it. Then it may be under pressure, as it were popping out again when we least expect it, *and without our noticing it* – to have harmful influence on our thoughts, and therefore on our actions.

Very closely connected with the unconscious mind is the hereditary memory. Indeed, you might almost say it is the lowest drawer, or the deepest vault.

This also has its good uses – and its very bad abuses, if we do not know of its existence and take care to control it.

We are never aware of this lowest layer of the mind. It shows itself in what is called *instinctive* behaviour. In Chapter XII, if you remember, we saw that all human beings have the same basic instincts: urges towards self-preservation, self-assertion, reproduction, companionship, and knowledge.

These are needs which were learned by our remotest ancestors in their bitter struggle for life. Their memory is re-born in each human mind, deeply buried, but ready to be put into use at once directly the occasion arises.

In other words, we each carry in us the memory of all the creatures since the amoeba which have needed to find food, defend themselves against enemies, continue their kind, consort with others like themselves for safety, and explore new territory and new ways of living.

When you think of the long and fascinating history of life, you will not perhaps find it surprising that all these instincts are so strong in each of us.

The terrible struggle of those early creatures, the courage and resource they must have shown, the way in which Life refused to be beaten by any odds! It makes one proud to live, and carry on the torch of life.

They have left us some marvellous legacies.

You do not have to waste valuable time and thought on every stage of the process of eating and digestion. Your Digestive System sees to that without your thinking about it – only because, millions of years ago, it was done painfully stage by stage.

When you are walking along, and something falls from the roof of a house, you do not have to stop and think

before sending down those messages to the legs and feet. You hop out of the way pretty quick! And all because our primitive ancestors had to be continually on the look-out for danger, and swift in avoiding it, if they were not to be killed off.

If a fly buzzes near your eye, you 'instinctively' close it at once, without having to think about it. Again, because the habit of protection in this way was re-learned a million times a year before you were thought of.

These are the small usefulnesses of our hereditary memory. It has its dangers, too.

Early mankind, and the forms of life which went before it, learned how to live in a very hard school. To save its own life, it was often necessary to take other life. To gain food, it was often necessary to take it away from other creatures, without care whether they lived or died.

That is why we speak of 'jungle law', or 'savagery'.

Here, I believe, we have the origin of selfishness. Part of the hereditary memory in each of us is this impulse to put self first.

But just as every human being has to grow up, by passing through certain definite stages, so mankind has got to grow up, too. We are past the stage now where selfishness is a useful thing. To-day we have got to forget that lesson of the past, and learn to live together in communities where all work for the good of all.

It is not possible for you or me to put the world right. But we can start with ourselves. When selfishness – whether it be murderous temper or just plain greed or unreasonableness – rises out of our hereditary memory, through the unconscious mind, and makes us do things our conscious mind would disown if we let it, then is the time to take ourselves in hand.

You know, and I know, that these occasions happen every day with all of us.

So always remember the *trio* which makes up the complex melody of your mind. Try to make it a real harmony, with each partner well in control.

If everyone could learn the need, and start doing their best to act accordingly, there would soon be little wrong with the world. It is our inner selves, and not outer things, which should be put right first – for our own sakes and everyone else's.

CHAPTER XV

Coming into the world: What did you think about it?; into the cold world; need of security and love; are you a howler?; passing on your own disabilities; learning social behaviour

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Coming into the world

I wonder if it has ever occurred to you to wonder what a baby thinks about being born.

I am using the word 'thinks' now in a special way, because we know that a new baby is not aware of thinking in the same way that you and I are.

Yet the baby has a brain, which, although it is as yet undeveloped, contains the power to expand and grow. He has a mind which, like yours and mine, exists on all three levels: conscious, unconscious, and inherited memory.

You know that baby mice and kittens are born with their eyes still unopened. The human baby is born with open eyes, it is true, but it is several weeks before he is able to see with the clearness of older children and grown-ups.

The baby has to learn to use his eyes. He has, as we say, to learn to bring them into focus. In just the same way, the baby has to learn to use his mind – particularly the upper level, or conscious mind, which later on will come to seem the most useful part.

In fact, while you were a tiny new baby, the very parts of your mind which are now most hidden – not merely from other people but also from yourself – were then the most obvious. For how else did you know to try to use your eyes, or to suck at your mother's breast, except through the

working of the inherited memory of which you are no longer conscious?

Since we have come to understand that all early impressions can leave indelible marks on the mind of the child, mind-scientists have been asking themselves the question: How soon do those impressions begin to be recorded in the brain of the new baby?

I do not suppose that you can, even if you are quite young, remember things that happened to you in the first few years of your life. But under the process of examination by the mind-scientist – called psycho-analysis – some people have found that they could remember things which occurred even so far back as while they were babes in arms.

So mind-scientists have come to believe that even the very earliest impressions – of the moment of birth and even before that – do leave their marks in the mind of the new baby.

Think of the long, warm months during which you lay cosily inside your mother's womb. Every want was supplied. Never cold or hunger or effort.

So deep is the impression made on most of us by the long-buried memory of that warmth and comfort that the great majority of people curl themselves up in bed in exactly the position of the child in the womb – knees up, back rounded, arms folded together.

Then, after all this comfort and warmth and peace, the time came for you to be born. Suddenly the soft warm lining of the baby's nest began to break up. Your mother's strong muscles, which had carried your growing weight all this time, began to push you violently out of your comfortable bed.

So you came, head first, struggling out into what must have seemed the very cold, bleak air of the world. Probably then you were held upside down and lightly spanked, to encourage you to take your first separate breath!

What wonder if you howled!

Cast out from warm darkness into cold light; forced to breathe for yourself; then to make the effort of sucking in your own nourishment, digesting it and getting rid of waste matter from your body – it is hardly strange if you got and kept way down in yourself some impression of this tremendous event.

Nature probably had her purpose, even in this.

A child which was too weakly to survive in the savage world of long ago would probably have decided not to face the harsh world, and so would have died – being unfit for the dangers it would otherwise have met.

On the other hand, if the effort involved in being born does, as we now believe, leave an impression on the baby's mind, that is quite useful too. For it helps to prepare the child to be ready to expect difficulties and dangers, when it does survive.

Fortunately, for most of us after the first shock of birth, warmth and comfort are in store again. We snuggle up in our mother's arms and are surrounded by her love.

Now as I think we noted once before, when you were a tiny baby you did not at first realize the difference between Yourself and Other People.

This is quite natural, for indeed, inside your mother's womb you were still part of her.

Once out of that nest, just as you had to learn to use your eyes properly, so you had to learn to use your thinking mind. Part of that process is in realizing that you are now a separate person.

Meanwhile, just as while in the womb you took it for granted that you should be warm, comfortable and well-fed on your mother's blood, so after birth you took it for granted that you should be warm, comfortable and well-fed.

In other words, while in the womb you had a deep inner

feeling – though of course you could not think plainly – of safety and of being cared for. After birth, too, you continued to need safety (or security), and to be cared for (or loved).

So deep a mark is made in the minds of all of us by those first impressions that all our lives long those same needs are with us.

If a growing child does not get proper food and care, he will grow deformed. In just the same way, the growing mind will become deformed if it is denied the feeling of security and the sense of being loved.

Security includes a number of things. It means actual physical safety. It also means what you might call 'moral safety' – the certainty that life will be orderly and follow a certain definite pattern, without too many shocks.

The sense of being loved is, I think, plain enough. Remember, though, that it also includes the chance to give love in return; in other words, to consider yourself one with the loving and loved one – just as mother and baby in the beginning were one.

Without Security and Love the human being becomes starved and stunted in character – in just the same way that the starved child develops twisted limbs.

Suppose that for some reason, while you were a tiny baby, your sense of security was upset. Left in the care of an ignorant woman instead of a sensible one, you did not get fed at regular times. Either food was forced down your neck when you were not hungry, or you were made to wait, yelling, when you were.

The first result, of course, was that your bodily workings went wrong. Digestion was upset, and you became a fretful and undernourished child.

Even worse long-term damage was done, because you were left with the impression that the world was a dangerous, unpredictable place, without safety and without love.

That is how the 'constitutional worriers' can be made –

the people who are frightened to do anything new, and are always haunted by the feeling that something must go wrong soon.

Of course, that is not the *only* thing that can bring about that state of mind – but it is one of the causes.

If this did happen to you, and you have not until now been able to realize why you were always frightened of things, then (being unaware of your own frame of mind) you will not have been able to start altering it.

What an excellent phrase is *frame of mind* in such cases as these.

It is as if the framework of the mind had got bent or twisted, pulling the mind itself slightly out of shape to fit it.

Still thinking of the need for Security – suppose yourself as a baby to have been the victim of some foolishly jovial young aunt or uncle. Thinking they were being very jolly, they joggled you about unmercifully or threw you up to the ceiling.

So long as their hands were strong and firm, and you felt safe, it was fun. But if you lost even for a moment the sense of security and complete certainty that you would not be allowed to fall, then it caused a misery of fear which may have left marks to this day.

With one exception – which I will tell you about in a minute – I do not think the tiny baby can be given too much Love.

Later, as we shall see when we come to your Childhood, it can be very harmful for the older child to be smothered with love. Not so with the baby.

Still so near to the memory of the warmth and security of the womb-nest, you had not yet learned to look on yourself as an independent being. Love was therefore natural and necessary, since your mother and you still seemed to be one.

Let us now, for a moment, look at that one exception I

mentioned just now. A mother who loves her child dearly may often be tempted to give in to it when it cries, even if that means interfering with the regular routine of its feeds.

A baby does not, usually, cry without cause. So if you were a howler, your mother was wise to look first to see if a pin or a nappy chafed you, if you needed a change of nappies, or if there was anything else making you uncomfortable.

If there was no real reason, then I regret to say that the cause might just have been temper. Remember, as a tiny baby you were learning to use your mind. As a howler, one of the first things you learned was probably that you could get your own way – by being picked up and rocked, or fed – if you made a sufficient noise.

If your mother, from frayed nerves or from too much affection, gave in to you then – I am afraid you are a howler still.

We have all met them. The children and adults who think they have only to keep on long enough to get what they want. Very unpleasant people to be with. I am rather sorry for them, though. No one worthwhile is going to put up with them for ever, and they will find themselves without friends in the end.

To get something you have got to give something. To have consideration from others, you have got to give consideration to others. Owing to their mothers' foolishness, the howlers have got to go through some unhappy experiences before the original damage to their minds is undone.

Most of us do get all the affection we need while in the baby stage. It can sometimes happen, however, that a baby feels itself to be unloved, or uncared-for – which to the baby amounts to the same thing.

A woman may say she loves her baby, and believe that to be true. But if she does not give him real care and attention, she is only deceiving herself.

Though she can deceive herself, and may deceive other adults, she cannot deceive the baby. He will know.

So let us now suppose that you were a love-starved baby.

You may have been wrong in getting this impression. Your father may have had lots of work. Your mother – the really important parent in the first years of life – may have been overworked and overburdened. On the whole, though, I think the instincts of the tiny child are usually right in this matter.

Still, as a love-starved baby, you have developed through childhood always with the idea that the world was a cold, unfriendly place and that life was too much for you.

You do not know yourself where the idea came from. It just seemed to grow up in you. Everything that happened seemed to point the same way.

Later, when you yourself have a child, you may try to make up for this. At last, your inner heart will say, you have got something that is *yours* – that you can absolutely love, so that you think of nothing else.

Unless you are careful, you will smother that child with love, even when he has got to the stage where he should be learning to stand on his own feet.

That is how mistakes have unending results.

That is the true meaning of the phrase about *the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children*. Not a divine command, but a statement of fact.

That is how you get weak-willed children afraid to venture out from behind their mother's skirts, who never see any joy or adventure in life. It is the final result of the kink made in that mother's mind when she herself was a love-starved baby.

No. Not the *final* result, because the baby, having his own different kink, will make other errors when he in his turn becomes a parent.

You may have wondered how it is some people come to

be so domineering. The proverbial mother-in-law is an example, the kind of woman who does not seem to be able to let her son and his wife live their own lives, but must try to run everything for them.

She is very probably a mother who, having as a baby been love-starved, has made the mistake of fastening so strong a love on her child that she cannot accept the fact that he now has his own life to lead.

It may make it a bit easier for you to understand other people, especially when they annoy you, if you remember that very probably their irritating ways spring from some such early disappointment.

No completely balanced, contented person will spend his time criticizing, condemning, and interfering. He will be too busy leading his own well-ordered life.

So far we have dealt with your babyhood only during the period when it still seemed to your unfocused mind that you were actually part of your mother.

Then, stage by stage, the realization came that You were You. That must have been exciting too: beginning to recognize other people, being held by them in their different ways, getting to know their different voices and faces.

Knowing other people brought with it the need to be taught to respect other people's rights and convenience – in short, you, the baby, had bit by bit to be taught *social behaviour*.

Growing-up consists very largely in learning first that we are separate from others, and then that we are part of them. We have to discover how to be self-reliant individuals, and also how to live so as not to inconvenience and hurt others in the process.

We must do unto others as we would they should do unto us, because that is the only workable way to live so close together as we do in our modern overcrowded communities.

When nations learn to act on the same principle, the world will know a true peace for the first time in its troubled history.

Even the tiniest baby, as you once were, must begin very early to learn this lesson.

You probably will not remember your own case, but if you have younger brothers and sisters you may know how important it is that a baby should be trained to digest his food and get rid of waste matter from his body at regular intervals.

There are two reasons for this.

The first is the baby's own health and well-being. It is very important that his internal workings should not get out of order and poisoned with waste material. For the sake of the impression left with his young mind, regular habits in general are also desirable.

The second reason is the social convenience of the people around. Obviously, we could not live a healthy and clean community life if everyone made a mess just wherever and whenever they thought they would.

As a day-old baby, of course, you had not learnt this yet. Indeed, you were not conscious of making a mess at all – except perhaps for having a comfortable pleasure and relief in getting the refuse (or waste matter) out of your body.

But you had to learn, being held out regularly by the wise mother over the little pot, and encouraged to clean out your body. You were praised and thanked when the job was done.

Now this was as it should be, since it encouraged the regular habits essential for physical health and peace of mind. Equally important, it made clear to your baby mind that you must not exercise your clever power of making a mess – the first thing, remember, that a baby does make, and therefore important to it – except when it did not inconvenience others.

On the other hand, it is very wrong to punish a baby, or even a child, because he has made a mess in his bed, for instance, or on the floor.

He may be too young to have learned his lesson properly yet. He may not have got quite full control of his inner muscles. Or, on the other hand, there may be some reason in the child's mind why he behaves in this way.

Usually, a baby responds to training in habits of personal cleanliness just as readily as a little puppy does, if you start him young in the way he should go. But there are unusual cases.

We have already seen how the lower layer of the mind, the unconscious, sometimes causes us to do things to which our thinking mind would never agree.

A baby or child cannot be expected to have any control of such impulses. Heaven knows only too many adults have not learned it, either.

Suppose, then, that for some reason a baby is uncomfortable. Perhaps someone is holding him awkwardly. Perhaps he has just been picked up by someone who held him awkwardly once before.

The baby may very easily show his resentment by wetting the offender's lap!

Even quite grown children have been known to wet their beds, often in their sleep. Here again, physical weakness may be the cause. If not, it means that some trouble in their unconscious mind is causing them to do this unsocial action as a kind of revenge – without the consent of their thinking mind.

Where bed-wetting occurs during sleep, this is even more plainly the case. The restraint of the thinking mind is slackened, so that a child who would never do such an action while awake is 'let down' by that deep-buried but powerful lower mind-layer.

Because the child did not thinkingly mean to be a

nuisance, it is no good a parent giving punishments, or even grumbling, in cases like that. In fact, to grumble is very unfair and may be harmful, making the child feel ashamed and guilty.

The only right thing is to try to find out what is the matter troubling him deep in his mind, and to put that right. Perhaps of even greater importance, the parent should question himself as to what he is doing wrong in the upbringing of his child.

CHAPTER XVI

Getting used to the world: The family – *Poverty and the child:* Environment and heredity; can riches be bought too dearly?; what is conscience?; the big business man – *Punishment and the child:* Wise and foolish punishment; parental injustice; parents and children both human

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Getting used to the world

The lesson we all start to learn so early goes on.

Having come to realize that you were now a separate being from your mother, you discovered bit by bit that you were part of a family.

The actual shape of the home became gradually clear. You learned to know the rooms, and after a time began to make exciting explorations of your surroundings.

Here again, if you had sensible parents, the laws of Security and Love ruled your life, so that you were not exposed to any great danger, and knew where to run to in trouble.

Meanwhile, you were not the only one learning. If your parents were truly wise they were learning too – especially if you were a first baby.

They had already learned, I hope, not to let you be a howler, if you had shown signs that way. Now they had to begin to learn that often very difficult lesson for parents to let you make your own mistakes.

Too much love can have just as bad effects as too little. It is sometimes very difficult for a loving mother or father to realize that if their baby is to walk, he must take a few falls.

Children can suffer very greatly both by being forced on too fast for their nature, and by being held back. The baby whose proud mamma wants him to be a local record may develop bandy legs because she tried to force him to support the weight of his chubby body on them too early.

Or, again, the mother who cannot bear to think of her child tumbling down may keep the baby backward for too long a time. No harm, you may think, if the child does not walk until the age of two.

I agree – if that is his nature. But if originally he was quite an adventurous baby, the continual fussings and frettings of mother or father may give him the idea that he is something specially fragile and precious – and take away his natural courage.

So you crawled, stumbled, walked, wanted to find out if fire burned like you were told it did – and found out. Squabbles with brothers and sisters, or the neighbours' children, gradually taught you that other people have a right to their own wishes and property as well as you.

Gradually your outlook widened to include other people's homes and families – learning, learning all the time.

Poverty and the child

What was your home background like, and how did you find it compare with other homes? This is one of the things which may have influenced your development very profoundly.

We do not live in a perfect world, by any means.

In itself, that is not so very dreadful. If we lived in a perfect world, there would be no way of learning to make a choice between good and bad, and not so much to do to make it better.

On the other hand, our world is rather less perfect than a lot of us would like to see it. There is a lot we can help to get changed.

One of those things is really bad living conditions, which do not give a child a sporting chance to develop in the proper way, physically or mentally.

You will remember that we each inherit certain *tendencies*. These tendencies may develop this way or that, according to what happens to us. This applies both to our bodies, and to our characters as well.

Real poverty and distress, like all other experiences, can cause different reactions in different children, according to their own inner nature.

There are people who react to experience by withdrawing into themselves and feeling beaten. Others react to the same set of circumstances by fighting back – sometimes too much.

So if you are one of those who have had a bad start in life, from the point of view of money or social position, remember to keep that in mind. If you have reacted too much in either direction, now is the time to pull yourself up so that the effects do not go on poisoning your life.

You can feel that the whole world is against you, and become very bitter. In that case, you will go through the world with a grouse against life, always beaten because in your deepest heart you expect to be beaten – and what you *really* expect usually comes to you.

Or you can look at it from the other point of view: that the greater the difficulty to be overcome, the greater the achievement. In that case, you will quietly and confidently feel equal to undertaking any reasonable task.

You may, of course, have tried to hide the first reaction by being bumptious, by going around shouting from the house-tops that you are as good as anyone else. But if in your most secret heart – that is to say, your unconscious

mind – you really believed that, there would be no need to shout.

Do not think, either, that poverty is the only possible evil. People can come from poor homes, but have had such good parents that what they have lost in financial backing they make up in strength of character.

Again, people can come from rich homes and have had their characters ruined by too much indulgence or neglectful, pleasure-loving parents.

Whatever your initial difficulties or advantages, it is to a very great degree still up to you what you make of them.

Of course, if you do not look into yourself and see where you are going, this will not apply. You will simply act in the way indicated by the 'scars' made on you – as on the young marrow – either by suffering or by indulgence, without knowing why.

That need not happen, if you pull yourself up in time.

At the risk of straying from the subject, I would like just to intrude my personal opinion on a matter which may have occurred to you in thinking of your own future.

Although many young people suffer from the feeling that they have not had a chance in life compared with others, there is really no need to feel like that except in extreme cases.

So long as you are reasonably healthy in body and mind – and if you can learn to look into yourself and try to make the best of yourself in talents and characters – you will come through.

You hear a lot to-day about how wonderful it is to be rich. Everyone seems to be madly trying to get rich. You are not taught nowadays, in books and films, to admire courage and kindliness so much as the power to get-rich-quick and stay rich.

The whole idea seems to be that it does not much matter *how* you get rich, so long as you *do* – or what price you pay

in contentment and peace of mind so long as you pull it off.

There is a great mistake in this. Part of the 'inherited memory' in each of us includes a sense of right and wrong – which is called conscience. Out of the millions of actions right and wrong, which have been done since the start of time, our race *has* reached broad conclusions as to what is honourable and what is not.

Except in grave and involved moral problems, we do know the difference between right and wrong. For all practical purposes, we do have a 'still small voice'.

You cannot go on denying that voice without harming your own deepest self. That is hell. Not eternal flames, but the injury you do to yourself when you deny your best instincts. If you gain the world at that cost, you have indeed lost your own soul.

If you want just one small childhood illustration to help prove this big point, remember how deeply you felt the occasions when you knowingly did wrong.

Sometimes your understanding of your own wrong-doing comes out in peculiar ways. I remember, for instance, going through a short period of childish stealing – pilfering if you like – of small things.

I knew it was wrong. How did that knowledge show itself, pushing its way up out of the memory-cellar where I had buried it deep so as not to be worried by it? Well, when I was accused *wrongly* of taking something I had not taken, I was as mad as a hatter.

Why so much indignation? Because the troubled conscience I had been trying to bury was lively still. My rage at myself came out doubly strong against the wrongful accuser.

While on the subject of riches and poverty, I would like to tell you a few things I have come to believe out of my own experience as a doctor.

It is true that I am comfortably off now, but do not think that I have not known poverty as well, and have not a right to talk.

On the contrary, there were times when I was just starting on my career as a doctor, when my wife and myself hardly knew where our next meal was coming from. True, that may to a large extent have been the result of my own extravagance and folly, but the fact remains.

Yet as I look back on those days, it seems to me that in many respects I was more truly living my life than I do now, in comparative comfort and a more settled routine.

My early experience as a doctor was among the ordinary working people. There I met, as you might say, 'all sorts' – the hardworking and thrifty, the shiftless and feckless.

There were homes which were poor but spotlessly clean, and other places unworthy of the name of home – hateful and dirty, with dirty people inside them.

But on the whole what struck me more than the sordid side of things was the great number of people honestly trying in bad conditions to live decent lives. Even more, I was struck by the contentment and real family happiness among such people.

In a broadcast of the Brains Trust, I heard Prof. Joad repeat what seems to me a very silly phrase: 'At least let me be miserable in comfort.'

When you come to look into the lives of people who are, so to speak, smothered with comfort, you find that the excessive comfort goes a long way to help to make the misery.

Agreed, certain basic conditions of life should be open to everyone as by right. Grinding poverty and misery should be done away with. But a smothering comfort equally takes away the zest for life.

My own experience has taught me that in plain fact

contentment and peace of mind are worth more than material things.

Nowadays the greater number of the people I meet professionally are moneyed people. It is a very remarkable thing that among them I could count on my two hands the number of really contented people. An infinitesimal number, compared with those I found among people who seemed to have so little on which to found happiness.

So if your own reaction against early poverty has been an aggressive and bitter one, try to get rid of it. Do not, on the other hand, let yourself be held back by a fear of perpetual failure.

Look forward, work and play – both – and believe in yourself sufficiently that you can attain to a reasonable success.

A *reasonable* success. You do not want to turn into the hard, driving business-man who boasts that he works sixteen hours a day at money-making, and claims that no one ever gets the better of him.

Such a man is only proclaiming to the world his own lack of inner harmony. He has to drive himself, and shout around in this way, because he has never been able to make a really happy personal life.

This is probably due to 'mental scars' of the kind of which we have been talking. Too much poverty and humiliation in childhood may have made it necessary for him to keep telling himself what a clever fellow he is. If he can find no better companionship than his office desk for what should be leisure hours, think how lonely he must feel inside.

Punishment and the child

Not all children are born into such conditions of poverty that it may have a harmful influence upon their minds'

growth. It may happen, however, to any child, unless his parents are very wise, to suffer from ill-judged punishment.

Now it is true that children have got to learn to live in the world with other people, and not to behave in a way which will inconvenience them.

As soon as you, as a very young child, began to realize that You were You, and separate from Others, it followed you also had to begin to learn that other people's wishes might be different from yours. What suited you did not always suit them.

This is a lesson, I am afraid, which we all have to learn. Unless it is learned well, we shall only injure others and ourselves.

After all, other people have the same right to exist that we have – no more, but certainly no less. So we have got to get used to the fact of each other's existence and all it entails.

In this, too, we must try to get older for a sense of proportion. When dealing with your own friends, it may be just as harmful always to give way as always to insist on your own way.

Always to give way, irrespective of the circumstances, will only be to encourage the other person in selfishness. Always to want your own way is to set up as a little dictator.

In other words, we should be neither doorstops nor doormats, but learn both to give and take gracefully as occasion requires.

As a young child, you could not be expected to understand this at once. In the first wonder of realizing your own existence, you naturally looked at everything only from your own point of view.

Not you alone, unfortunately! There are only too many grown-ups about – and parents too, some of them – who have remained children in that they can never see anyone's point of view but their own.

In order to prevent the world being peopled with grown-up children – which would be very uncomfortable for everybody – the selfish child must if necessary be wisely and justly punished for inconsiderate behaviour.

That punishment is not intended by the wise parent as a revenge. When you slap your puppy because he has just made a mess in the house you are not being revengeful. You are simply getting his mind used to the fact that slapping follows making a mess in the wrong place.

The child who continues after warnings to make social 'messes' by selfish behaviour has to be taught that punishment will follow. Though you may find it hard to believe, it is for your good in the long run. If you have not learnt the lesson of consideration for others yet, life itself will teach it much more bitterly later on.

Now you may be thinking that I am 'showing the cloven hoof', being myself a father; but I can assure you I take no side in this. Though I am now a father, I have been a child, and have very distinct memories of my childhood. There is usually a lot to be said on both sides.

I do sincerely believe, though, that a child must be taught how to live among other people. On the other hand, needless punishment – and above all, unjust or foolish punishment – should never be given. It may leave indelible marks on the mind of the child.

It is very unlikely that you yourself have been given some of the foolish punishments which used to be meted out to unfortunate children by ignorant people – say, fifty years ago.

It is possible, though, that this may have happened to you, for even to-day many adult people do not understand how children's minds work, or the lasting harm they may do them.

Such things as shutting a child up in a dark place, or threatening him with the 'bogy-man', can leave a mark of

fear in his mind. Later in life, that mark may remain as a continual sense of fear without apparent reason.

Remember that if you are ever tempted to 'shut up' a baby sister or brother in this way – however irritating they may be. And I know they can be.

Unjust punishments are another thing that a child is likely to take very badly. I do not think there are many of us who do not remember some occasion when we were unjustly punished. How angry and indignant we were then! All the more indignant because in our hearts we knew of the times when we really *had* done something, and got away with it!

I should like to say a word or two here in defence of the parent who by mistake commits an act of injustice.

It is not always possible for the mother or father, however careful they are, to judge and weigh up a quarrel inside the family.

It is natural for you to look up to your parents and expect a very high standard of knowledge and conduct from them – but remember that they, too, are human beings, and human beings who are still in the process of learning to live.

So it sometimes happens, especially where there is more than one child, that the wrong child is punished. Then he may bear a bitter grudge against his father or mother for the unjust punishment.

Perhaps you can remember such an incident in your own life. Perhaps it was not possible to get out of punishment except by 'telling on' your brother or sister.

In such a case, it seems to me that the best course is to take the punishment – but not to bear a grudge about it, because you are big enough to see how the mistake came about.

You see, as soon as you grow out of babyhood, you really become a member of the family. That membership gives you certain rights and privileges.

You have certain claims on your parents – but they have also certain claims on you, for you cannot go on taking without giving.

That is one of the chief facts of life – a natural law. It is a natural law as surely as the fact that the sun must draw up water from the seas if we are to have the rain which falls upon the hills.

You cannot go through life taking – whether it be things or affection – without giving as well. You may get away with it for a time, if you try to make your life a one-way 'taking' street. But you will not get away with it all the time.

So in the home. You have a claim on the affection of mother and father, and in most homes that claim is fully met. You have a claim on their care, and here again in most homes the parents meet that claim by providing to the best of their ability shelter, food, clothing, and nursing when you fall ill.

You, as a member of the family, owe something in return. You are of an age now to understand that, but as a baby it had to be taught you.

If each member of the family gives affection for affection, and help and support in return for help and support, the family will be a strong and vital unit of life. It will resemble those many-cell organisms which turned out to be so much more efficient in the job of living than the single amoeba.

If you have learned to give and receive in family life, you are on the way to learn to give and receive in communal life – that is, to be a good citizen.

It may help you, now as a child and later as a parent, to understand that punishment should be given wisely and without spite only in order that this lesson of communal living should be taught.

Stop reading for a moment, close your eyes and think how far this rule has applied to the home discipline in

your own life. On the whole, has this been the principle on which you have been brought up, or does a sense of injustice still linger?

Made up your mind? Well, in case you should still feel that sometimes you have just been forbidden what seemed to you harmless pleasures, or have been unjustly punished, I would like to say one last word about how that may have come about.

Your parents are human beings. I have said that before, but it is very important that you should realize it fully.

When they were children, it was the fashion to be very strict indeed. Children were to be 'seen and not heard', often allowed very little entertainment, and frequently made to feel that they were merely dependent creatures, not full members of the family at all.

There are therefore many parents in the world to-day who, owing to the harm done them by this upbringing, tend to repeat the error of their own parents. Never having been taught to do so, they grew up without the power to look into their own minds and see the effect of their upbringing upon them.

In extreme cases, they simply 'take out' on their children the miseries they themselves suffered as children. Their uncontrolled unconscious minds are causing them to take a revenge. If they realized what they were doing – that is, if they had ever learned to check the activities of their unconscious mind by their reasoning conscious mind – they would be horrified at themselves.

Such extreme cases are rare, but where they happen a wise child must understand how such things come about. Through understanding it will be possible to forgive, and to prevent himself doing the same when he in turn becomes a parent.

CHAPTER XVII

Problems of childhood: Those awkward questions; confidence between parent and child; are these your problems?; why we all make the same mistakes

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Problems of childhood

Even when you have grown, say, to the age of 8 or 10, and are part of a happy, united family, there may still be problems which worry you, and which you seem to be unable to solve by yourself.

Probably in the first instance, your natural impulse was to turn to your parents for help. That, indeed, should be the natural order of things.

It is likely, however, that you did not get a plain answer, especially if your questions had any bearing upon the Reproductive System. You may have got either quickly 'shut up', or else been put off with an evasion which you felt to be no real answer.

In that case you soon learned to keep your questions to yourself, or to take them elsewhere – either to a more understanding grown-up, or, more likely, to a friend of your own age.

Nor was that the only impression left on your mind. Not only did you come to feel that it was no good going to your parents for answers to such questions, but you were also left with the impression that it was very wrong of you to have asked.

Remember, for the time when your own child comes to you with questions, that the parent who does not give a direct answer in terms that the child can understand is injuring both himself and the child.

He is injuring them both by destroying the confidence which should exist between them. He is also injuring the child by leaving in the child's mind a feeling of guilt and uneasiness – as if there could be anything wrong in an innocent desire for knowledge!

If you are one of those children who have not been able to get plain answers from your parents, and have been left with a shameful feeling that you were wrong to have asked them, I want you to go back and read the last few paragraphs of the last chapter again.

Try then to understand that if your own parents became embarrassed when asked certain kinds of questions, it is because the things you asked about were not explained to them in a sensible way in their own childhood.

The damage was done in their minds then. They were left with the impression that it was wrong to ask those questions which they themselves in childhood asked in vain. You cannot expect them to be able to change that impression now, so long after.

Once confidence has been destroyed between children and their parents, it is unlikely to come back. The child will keep even his most ordinary thoughts and feelings to himself, and will turn to other people – not necessarily the best ones – to whom to give his confidence.

Sensing that the parents are applying old and worn-out ways of thinking to modern conditions – always a fatal thing to do – the child will tend to regard mother and father as out of touch with the problems of his own life.

This will add to a certain gulf which always seems to exist between parents and children.

It was natural for you, as a small and helpless child, to 'look up' to your parents, both in actual fact and in your mind. To the baby, the adult must seem like a god, able to do just what he pleases.

As you grow older, you learn bit by bit that this is not

so. With your own parents, the idea tends to hang on, so that you regard them as not quite human beings – as super-human beings, in fact.

That is where you are wrong.

If parents and children regarded each other as human beings, liable to make mistakes and with ordinary human feelings, they would get on better together. They would not expect too much of each other, so they would usually be agreeably surprised, instead of disappointed through expecting too much.

It should be possible for a child to tell his parents any thought which passes through his mind, knowing that they will not be shocked or even surprised.

As you have grown and developed, taking an interest in the world around you, it has of course occurred to you to try to work out all kinds of questions for yourself.

How are babies born? How did the world get made? Should there be such a thing as divorce? Where is God?

Questions like these, on sex, religion, morals, and probably politics, are bound to have come to your mind. There is absolutely no reason why you should not think round them for yourself. I would suggest, though, that, however passionately you may feel your conclusions to be right and other people's wrong, you will leave room in your mind to absorb any new facts that come along, and if necessary change your opinion.

We learn so much as we go through life – or rather, we have so much opportunity to do so, if we like to take it – that it would be silly to close your mind against new facts just because they do not fit in with your theories.

You probably know by your own experience that if your parents made a sharp, dictatorial answer when you put forward your own ideas on these things, it made you close up like an oyster.

Very many children come early to the conclusion that

they had better be careful what they say to their parents. So they keep their real inner minds entirely to themselves, and later on their mother complains to an aunt that 'Johnny never tells me anything', or 'Alice never lets me know what she's doing'.

Mothers and fathers who have to say that have only themselves to blame.

Parents are not superhuman beings, nor are children all-wise, since they have many years of living experience still to come.

Wise parents, however, make wise children.

If mother and father can content themselves to give guidance only on what you must think and believe, they will be rewarded in seeing their children under no need to take their confidence elsewhere.

If the child finds his questions simply answered, without embarrassment or surprise, he will benefit very greatly by the *completeness* of the understanding within the family.

This is something which goes very deep into the roots of family life, and is well worth a little patience on a tired parent's part when little Tommy starts on his eternal questions!

After all, if little Tommy gets no satisfactory answer at home, and gets fed up with chasing the same questions round and round in his mind, the next step is to find someone else to ask.

I said a little way back that this 'other person' may not be suitable. If the 'other person' is a sensible adult, there will be less harm done, but usually, as you may have found in your own case, children who have been given sharp answers turn to other children for what they want to know.

Here, it is usually a case of 'the blind leading the blind'. For if these other children too have been 'put off' at home with unsatisfactory replies, their own knowledge will be too little to be of any help.

Nor is that the worst that can happen. Other children, in their attempts to satisfy natural curiosity, may have got hold of 'the wrong end of the stick' entirely – in which case their information is worse than none at all.

Have you not found that out for yourself, in your own childhood?

Think too, if you can, and if you have been through this experience, of the feelings of shame or guilt with which you discussed such-and-such a subject with the little boy from next door.

Perhaps you wanted, quite understandably, to find out how babies were made. That is the most usual question that ever occurs to a child.

Your parents had put you off with some gooseberry bush story, or by saying you were too young to know. So, by chance, one day, you found out that Freddy-next-door was wondering just the same thing. He had been put off by his parents too.

So there you were, both feeling guilty to be talking about the question at all, feeling daring but also rather wicked, and probably swapping your own ideas which were all rather wide of the mark.

Both you and Freddy are very lucky indeed if that feeling of guilt has not remained in your mind, so that you still tend to look on the reproductive process as something rather indelicate. With very sensitive children they may even come to regard the whole thing with horror, just because of these early 'scars'.

What nonsense such an outlook is, too, when the conception and birth of every baby is a fresh miracle, and there is nothing so lovely as affection between human beings and the sight of a happy, growing family!

You will be awfully silly if you let the mistakes of your parents and teachers spoil for you the most beautiful things in the world.

How could they? you may ask.

Let us hope it has not happened to you. But remember the story of the young marrow, and its ever-spreading mark.

The child who is made to feel ashamed at having asked certain questions tries to push down into the lower levels of his mind both memory of the question and the feelings of shame with which it is connected for him.

Later, those feelings of shame push themselves out and become a nuisance in the living of his life.

Such feelings can be connected with a number of problems of childhood. Lying, petty stealing, jealousy of younger sister or brother, and curiosity about the way people's bodies are made, are the kind of worrying things I mean.

There are others, but these are the ones which bother us all when we are young. I suppose the kind of violent impulses I mentioned I had myself experienced come into the same list too.

The trouble is that when worried by this kind of problem, most children are perfectly sure they are the only ones who ever had to bother about such a thing before.

That is not the case at all.

Every child passes through stages where he may be worried by any of these things, and others too. Half the unhappiness of childhood – and it can be very bitter indeed – is caused by this kind of problem, and by the feeling of being alone in facing it!

If the child feels that he has done something wrong, and needs advice, he feels that he cannot turn to any grown person because no one else was ever so wicked before.

It is very understandable to feel like that. Few of us like to admit to the bad things we have done – and we have all done them – in case it should lower us in the other person's eyes.

On the other hand, a fault freely confessed with a sincere wish to overcome the temptation should be forgiven.

I do not mean by that that a wily child should be able to escape all punishment and do the same wrong thing over and over again because each offence was followed by confession and forgiveness! Confession and repentance then would seem rather like hypocrisy to me!

It should, however, be possible for a child to confess a fault, and to ask for help in overcoming a temptation, without punishment and in the certainty of gaining help.

As for the opinion of the grown-up person, if they love and understand you that will not suffer. Every grown person worth his salt has made a great many mistakes of his own – almost certainly including the one which is worrying you.

The fact that he has overcome them now is because he has passed through the stage of development to which those mistakes belong. But in the process of growing up *he had to pass through the stage which you are at now*, and therefore made in his time the same errors.

I will try and make that last couple of paragraphs easier for you to understand. Then I hope you will have a friendlier and warmer feeling for your adult friends.

You will remember how we saw in Part I that every human child before being born spends nine months in his mother's womb. During that time he passes rapidly through all the stages by which the human race came into being.

The development which originally took thousands of years is lived through until the baby is fit to be born into the world and have a separate life.

But even then the new-born infant is not a completed human being. His body continues to grow and develop. So does his mind.

And his mind in developing goes through all the stages of development of the human mind from savagery to our present stage of civilization.

In fact, childhood is to the human mind what the nine

months in the womb is to the human body. It is the period of development which fits the human being to live an independent life.

In both processes of development we all pass rapidly through the stages of physical and mental growth through which our ancestors have passed before us.

If you can see this, you will understand why the behaviour of a child often seems, to adults who have forgotten their own early feelings, to be without reason and sometimes even to be wrong. For the child lives in another world from the adult, and in that world the laws of social behaviour have not yet come into being.

CHAPTER XVIII

Childish brutality: The 'little savage'; is violence admirable? – *Childish lying:* The reasons why we tell lies; the 'social' lie, the self-preservation lie and the self-assertion lie; day-dreams

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Childish brutality

Early Man lived an almost entirely *physical* life. That is to say, he was curious about the world he lived in. Sometimes he pulled things to pieces just to find out what they were made of. He fought in order to survive. He hunted in order to eat and also to have pleasure in the strength of his body.

The young boy who romps about with animal high spirits and tears up things destructively is going through that same stage of development.

He will grow out of it, as humanity has grown out of it – or very nearly. But it is natural that he should do it now, and right that he should be taught that if it makes life difficult for other people he cannot be allowed to go on doing it.

A grown-up, and indeed an older child, will be revolted if he sees a small boy pulling the wings off a fly. The grown-up and the older child have learned to respect and obey certain 'moral' principles.

They recognize that life would be intolerable if those with physical strength were allowed to treat weaker beings badly. They understand that other creatures have an equal right to live besides ourselves – or, where those such as germ-carrying flies might be concerned, at least a right not to be tortured even when necessity says they must be destroyed.

These are things which must be *learned.*

Merely to be angry with the child is futile. It is necessary to understand why he does what he does, and to use only such punishment as will train him to social behaviour. In time the destructive phase of development will have been passed.

Better still, let him work off his primitive feelings on old toys, battered furniture, which will not suffer unduly.

A friend of mine recently told me how very much ashamed he still feels of the way in which, while at this stage, he used to work off his feelings by ill-treating his younger brother.

They had well-meaning parents, very nice people, but people quite out of touch with modern thought, so that instead of the home being a place of harmony it was one of conflict.

Being unable, by the sheer fact of being smaller, to vent on his parents his feelings of violent resentment whenever they disagreed, he had to find some other way.

Of course, he did not admit to himself when he bullied his younger brother that he was actually doing so because he could not treat his parents in the way he would have liked.

None of us, unless we have learned something of the mechanism of the unconscious mind, will admit to so unfair an impulse. He took advantage of any small way in which the young brother annoyed him to make that the starting-point for his bullying.

So you see, the lack of understanding between himself and his parents had very long consequences. It injured them by cutting them off from their child. It injured him in several ways: by cutting him off from his parents, by causing trouble between himself and his brother, and by developing the bully in himself. It also left him, long after the phase of childish brutality was passed, with deep feelings of guilt for his treatment of his brother. Probably it injured the

brother too, by leaving him with a constant fear of being attacked.

We have all passed through experiences similar to these in one way or another. If our childish brutalities have left us with guilty consciences, we can now understand them for what they were – part of the process of development – and be glad that we have got beyond that.

Before we pass on to the next childish problem, I would like to say one more thing about this. It is not unusual in some books and films to find violence held up as something praiseworthy. The gangster and 'cave-man' are made to seem the ideal of what one should be.

Strength, both of body and of character, is a very fine thing, and we are right to admire it where we may find it. But as Shakespeare said:

> *O! it is excellent*
> *To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous*
> *To use it like a giant.*

Admiration of violence for the sake of violence and of strength used in destruction of other people's lives and happiness, belongs to the infancy of the world and to our own infancy.

Where someone's mental development gets stuck at that infantile stage, you get the vicious and cruel character, even the mass murderer.

Our job must be to see ourselves and our children through each stage of development to complete adulthood.

Remember that in doing so we are adding, like an ant with one tiny grain on its back, our small bit to the future evolution of mankind. If generation after generation hands on an increasing power to control the non-moral primitive instincts, a greater Mankind may well come into being.

Childish lying

We have wandered some way from You, but perhaps the last section has helped you to understand some of your childish fits of temper and destructiveness. If so, it has been of some use.

Now we come to another childish trait which we all share.

Although they may have lapses, I think most grown-ups as time goes on do learn some control of their temper. Certainly the overwhelming majority cease to take an active delight in destructiveness and violence.

What is perhaps a still harder lesson to learn is the habit of truth. There are very few of us indeed who can say we never lie.

Mind you, in my opinion there are many occasions when the 'white lie' is permissible.

This may shock you. Most young people go through a stage where they carry everything to extremes. Having made up their minds not to lie, they will refuse to depart from absolute truth whatever the consequences – not only to themselves, but to others.

Now I agree that the consequences to oneself should be the least consideration. But if the truth is likely to be hurtful to someone, without serving any positive good, I am quite willing to compromise with truth on that occasion.

For instance, I have a dear friend who while she was a young girl suffered agonies through the idea that she was ugly – which she was not at all, anyway, but just in the gawky stage girls do sometimes go through before they become women.

When she got older, someone happened to say to her that she had beautiful hands. That was lovely for her, and helped to make up for her hidden sufferings before. But

not content to have nice hands, she had to tell herself they were wonderful.

They *had* to be wonderful, not just merely nice, to make up for the bruises her pride had received in the past through thinking she was ugly and awkward.

Now if she should say to me, as indeed she sometimes does, 'I have got beautiful hands, haven't I?', why should I start quibbling about it, since they are quite all right anyway?

Even if they were not, I should still let her think so, because it makes her happy and does not hurt anyone else.

So you see, I am not laying down any hard-and-fast rules about what are lies and what are not. It does seem to me that to save your skin from the consequences of your own mistakes by lying is a kind of cowardice, and to hurt anyone else by a lie is dishonest and malicious.

Beyond that, your own conscience will guide you, provided you have first learned to look into the workings of your own mind, so that you can no longer succeed – as so many people do – in lying to yourself.

So, having made an exception of the 'white social lie', let us narrow down our view to the kind of lies we all told in childhood.

There was the 'self-preservation' lie – part of the inheritance from those early ancestors whose concern was only to protect themselves by any means to long as they went on living.

You know the kind of lie I mean: *I didn't do it, he did. It fell down by itself, Mummy. I didn't lose it, a big man came and took it away from me.*

Essentially that is the instinct of self-preservation in action.

It is not a very serious matter, and a parent who takes too strong a view is being a little too particular. None the

less, the child must learn that there are things even more important than escaping a little punishment by a lie.

For one thing, from the purely practical point of view, if everyone went around telling lies, no one would ever know where they were. For another, to go on lying after a certain age does rather savour of shirking the responsibilities of your own actions.

It is better to take your punishment and learn from it than put the blame on to someone else.

There are other kinds of childish lies besides the 'self-preservation' one. The one into which every child falls comes from another of the primitive instincts: self-assertion.

It is very natural, after all. When you were a child you wanted now and then to impress people with your importance. A child is a very small being – remember how it felt?

It helped a bit, did it not, if you could kid some playmate of yours how rich your parents were, and how grand you were because they belonged to you? Or if, when you described your uncle's car, you turned it from an ancient Ford into a sparkling Rolls-Royce?

You can act a lie of this kind, too, as well as tell it.

When I was a very small boy I used to get a halfpenny a day to buy buns with. Of course, in those days a halfpenny went a lot further than it does to-day. You would not get many buns for that to-day – not even half a bun! But then, if I remember rightly, it bought two.

Some of the other boys got more pocket-money than I did. I do not remember now exactly what made me feel so bitter about it. Perhaps something had been said, or I had imagined something, which made me feel very poor and insignificant compared with them.

Anyway, I can remember how several times I went round the playground when no one was looking, trying to find a half-bun that had been thrown away by one of the boys who had too much.

I was not hungry. There was no question of that. What I wanted was to *assert myself* as equal to any of them – if not better – by pretending that I had unlimited supplies of buns and unlimited money.

Well, it is quite possible to meet adults who still do the same kind of thing on a bigger scale. They will try and impress you with this and that, because inside they still remain the child with the bruised mind – little and inadequate.

Many a lady with a mink coat does not wear it because it keeps her warm, or because it is a pretty fur, but because she wants to impress the world with what a fine person she is.

Poor little girl! For she is still the little girl who was made in some way or other to feel inferior to others, and never got over it.

If she had learned early to look into her mind, and 'straighten' it in time where necessary, she would be quite content to be just herself – without any need either to apologize for inferiority or to 'show off' and pretend she is much more than she really is.

If you want a childhood illustration of the same thing, we might take the example of 'showing off'.

Perhaps you were a clever child with your books, but felt that when it came to sports and games you were not as good as the others. Very probably you worked extra hard at your books, and always jumped up first to answer questions in class, just to show you were super-clever – and told yourself and others that games did not matter, anyway.

Or it may have taken you another way, in 'acted' instead of 'spoken' lying, so that you cheated if you saw a chance of it, or kicked if you thought it would give you a chance of making a brilliant pass.

If that was the case, you were not unlike the big-business man, who thinks any kind of 'sharp practice' all right so

long as it gives him a success which will make others look up to him just because of the money he has made.

In this way he misses the wood for the trees, and loses the fun involved in making one's way through difficulties. Much better to lose the game, or the success, knowing you have fought a good fight and done nobody down, than hold at the end an empty reward which deep in yourself you know to have been meanly won.

For the feelings of shame which you have had to push down inside you at the wrong means you have taken to gain your end, will remain for ever no matter how much you try to ignore them.

Why is it most of us try to impress other people, sometimes by quite wrong means, instead of being content to be ourselves? It is rather an important point.

Let us illustrate it another way.

Suppose that when you were a child your 'value' in the world – looks, brains, social position and so on – added up to 100 marks. Let that be a good average – you were neither a fool nor a genius, neither a Helen of Troy nor a Cyrano de Bergerac.

But you got the idea, because in some way you had been made to feel small, that your total was only about 75. Now, to soothe the hurt feeling that gave you, you had to keep telling yourself what you would have liked to hear.

Not that you were 100, but that you were 125! !

When you see people bombasting about the world, telling lies in word and deed to make themselves look grand, remember they are trying to make out that their marks add up to 125.

But also remember it is because they were once made to feel they were only 75.

In truth, they are 100. How much happier they would be, and everyone who came into contact with them, if they

realized that and could be contented to be 100 – to be themselves – and leave it at that!

Of course, where a person has a mild character, things can work out another way. His value is 100 marks. He is made to feel only 75. His self-confidence becomes undermined, and he becomes convinced that he is only 50. So another character is spoiled in the making.

So even after you have grown out of the *self-assertion* lie, and stopped trying to impress your playmates, keep a watch that you do not take yourself in with a similar lie to yourself.

Try neither to under- nor over-estimate yourself, but to form a sensible estimate of your own capacity. Then set yourself a goal in life just a little way – though not too far – out of your reach.

As a child, grow out of lying to others. As an adult, give up lying to yourself.

There is one form of lying to ourselves that all of us indulge in from time to time. Perhaps as a child you were not very happy, and instead of trying to impress others by outright lying, you let yourself drift off into wonderful daydreams.

It was so nice to sit by yourself and let your imagination wander, until you had convinced yourself that you were not just ordinary Dick or Jane, but a gallant knight or an imprisoned princess.

There is really not much harm in that, provided you do not persuade yourself that your imaginings are true, and provided that you do not get so attached to them that you refuse to face the facts of ordinary life.

Such dreams are natural to childhood, and grown-ups who laugh at them are being unsympathetic and unkind. Even grown-ups can indulge in them with no harm done – so long as they do not just come to use them as an escape from life, losing the will to face their problems.

Day-dreams can inspire us to become better than we are, and to do something in the world. But as we grow up we should for our own sakes recognize them for what they are, and not make them a retreat from reality.

If you have got any childish lies on your conscience, forget them – truly forget them, not just push them shamefully into the back of your mind because you were so humiliated when Mr So-and-so showed you up so dreadfully in front of everyone.

Take them out one night and look at them squarely, and then laugh at yourself as you realize why you told them – because you were then too weak to face the consequences of your own mistakes, or because you wanted to seem cleverer and more important than you felt inside.

Be comforted by the fact that everyone else has had the same dreams and made the same mistakes. You are no worse than anyone else, and no better – that is, if you have really grown up since then.

CHAPTER XIX

Childish stealing: The reasons why we steal; the reasons why we do *not* steal; how to grow out of stealing – *Childish jealousies:* The arrival of the 'little stranger'; security and love in family life – *Childish curiosities:* Those awkward questions again; why they embarrass some parents; getting 'the wrong end of the stick'; enlightenment and good manners

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Childish stealing

Just as no one's life has been free from lying, so I doubt if anyone's has been quite free from stealing – on a petty scale if you like, but stealing just the same.

In a way, I think your little thefts and scroungings in childhood were closely connected with your childish lies. Mostly they sprang from a similar desire to pretend, either to others or to yourself, that you were bigger and more important than you were.

Did you ever steal anything in order to give it to somebody else, to make them look up to you as generous and kind? Or in order to pretend that the stolen article – a penknife, or something like that – was your own, which you must be a very splendid person to possess? Or to impress your first little girl-friend by taking her out and giving her a special treat? Or to impress yourself, by taking the risk of being caught and having the thrill of getting round authority, so that you could tell yourself what a fine fellow you were?

Stop reading now for a moment, bring out those deep-hidden memories of the little thefts of which from time to time you have been so ashamed, and ask yourself whether

it was not some motive like that that was at the bottom of it?

Of course, there are thefts which do not come into this category, but I think it is true to say that the great majority of childish thefts do come from causes like that. They, too, are 'lies-in-action'.

There is the 'self-preservation' theft – stealing from mother's purse in order to pay back the sixpence you lost, to save being punished for the loss.

There is the 'self-assertion' theft – the chief one, I think – to show others or yourself how wonderful you are.

There is even the 'love' theft, when you either want to keep something which someone you love has touched, or to give a present you cannot afford to someone you want to love you.

Now if you look closely at these main reasons why as a child you committed some small theft or other, you will find how nearly they are related to the chief instincts of the human heart – the instincts which all of us carry within us as part of our heritage from ancient times.

Childish stealing is simply part of the re-living of those ancient times when there was no 'moral law'. Most children live through this stage and get it out of their systems in quite a short time.

Of course, if you do not get it out of your system, you are liable to stay like that for the rest of your life – but then you will never really be grown-up inside.

There are quite a large number of people about in the world who do steal, even when they are adult in years. There are several very good reasons for the 'moral law' which says stealing is wrong and silly.

For one thing, stealing is a much less satisfactory way of getting things than working for or making them yourself. It by-passes the fun of making a real effort.

It would also be very uncomfortable to live in a world where wholesale stealing went on. You would be pretty mad if someone stole something from you that you were fond of, and had perhaps saved hard to get.

When a thief is discovered, everyone who loves him suffers from the disgrace, so that the roots of family life are affected. You are not one person alone, but part of a family, and also part of the community – unable to do any action which does not have its effect upon others.

Even if a thief is not discovered, his error has grave effects upon his own mind. The feelings of shame which he refuses to admit even to himself go deep into his unconscious mind, to have far-reaching consequences there.

So, you see, by the time a person is old enough to become a citizen, he should have overcome those primitive instincts which caused his childish stealing.

Parents sometimes punish childish stealing very harshly. Sometimes so harshly that the child feels the punishment to be out of proportion to the offence.

Actually, if the child is quite young, I think they are making a mistake, and taking the risk of causing such resentment that the result may be defiance and even more stealing.

If you have been punished in this way – in your opinion beyond the gravity of your small case of childish stealing – I want you to try to get rid of the resentment which may be harming your mind, by trying to understand your parents' point of view.

They know how gravely stealing is looked on in the adult world. They probably did not understand that you were passing through a stage of growth which in time would come to an end. They were afraid that the stealing might become a habit if it went unpunished.

Unless they were very wise and understanding indeed, the more they loved you the more harshly they might

punish you. For the depth of their love only caused them to have the more terrible fear for your future.

Try to appreciate that your parents' concern for you was the reason for this punishment. If they went too far, it was because as human beings they were swayed too much by their feelings.

If you have been through this phase of childish stealing and got over it now, there is no reason why memories of your earlier lapses should make you uncomfortable.

Take them out of the memory lumber-box, realize why they happened, and then forget about them healthily.

I made a lot of mistakes like that when I was younger. In fact, it was not until I was in the hands of the mind-scientist myself – which you have to go through as part of the training to become a mind-scientist yourself – that I realized how much my hidden feelings of shame in that connexion had affected my character.

You are not the only one who ever stole small sums of money or things to eat or wear. If you have got over it now, there is no reason to fear it will happen again – like having measles!

Childish jealousies

I have put jealousy of a brother or sister into the list of common childish 'crimes', because it is so very common, and can cause some really unhappy results unless realized and controlled in time.

It is not really very strange that a child who has felt himself to be the chief object of his parents' love should resent the coming of a stranger to share that love.

Indeed, while that 'stranger' is still a baby, he will get by far the greater part of their attention. Meanwhile the first-born may sulk in a corner, feeling himself unloved.

Did this happen to you? Perhaps for the first few years of your life you were made to feel that your mother and father belonged only to you. I expect you were so selfish that it never even occurred to you that they belonged to each other as well – they were there for your benefit.

If your parents did not prepare you for the coming of another child, you suddenly found the day came when everyone's attention was focused on an ugly little bundle of clothes – and mother and father did not exist *only* for you any more.

Of course, if your parents were wise, they had spent some time earlier in telling you how they were getting a playmate for you.

Then you were just as eager as they were to look forward to the day when the baby arrived, and to wait until he had grown a bit and could be a real comrade.

If it had been explained to you that when baby first came he would be little and helpless, then it gave you a pleasant feeling of grown-upness to share with mother and father the job of looking after him.

If you had not realized what was about to happen, your whole world was shaken to bits. If you knew in advance, and were looking forward to it, family life seemed all the warmer and safer because the family had grown a bit larger.

So the sense of *Security* which you needed so badly was either destroyed or preserved.

If it was destroyed, *of course* you hated the new baby, and hated the world in which such sudden shocks could happen.

If it was preserved, your confidence in yourself and in life was strengthened the more.

If you had been led to believe that you had your parents' whole love, and always would have, you resented bitterly any sharing of that love, and even told yourself in your bitterness that you had lost it all. If, on the other hand, it

had been explained to you that the coming of another child meant the giving and receiving of a greater sum of love all round, you were ready to love and be loved by it.

So the sense of *Love* which you needed so badly was either destroyed or preserved.

If it was destroyed, *of course* you felt bitterly that love could not be depended upon, and you did not want to love those who seemed not to love you any more.

If it was preserved, your power to love only grew bigger and your love for parents and brother or sister only made them love you more in turn.

If your senses of Security and Love were destroyed, the feeling of resentment may have affected your relationship with your whole family from that day to this.

Has it done so? If so, realize now the mistake you made and try to put it right. The bigger the family, the larger the total sum of love in it. Why let resentments go on which started in the beginning only through childish jealousy and misunderstanding?

If your senses of Security and Love were preserved only by the coming of other children, you may thank heaven for your very wise parents, and need no further words from me on the subject.

Childish curiosities

I want you to go back for a moment to Chapter XVII and look through those pages in which we first started to examine the problems of childhood.

You will see there that I particularly mentioned there were some kinds of problems which, even more than the others, it was often difficult for a child to take to his parents.

You may be able to take your worries to your mother and father over such things as childish brutality, lying,

stealing and even jealousy, but still find it difficult to discuss with them certain kinds of curiosity which naturally occur to you.

You may remember that in our list of the primitive instincts or 'urges' shared by all mankind, one was the desire for knowledge.

Without it, man could never have developed even so far as he is to-day.

Mankind's search for knowledge is acted all over again with every child. As soon as a child can speak, he begins to want to know 'What?', 'How?', and above all 'Why?'

As soon as you could walk, or even crawl, you wanted to explore your surroundings. In those days, to climb upstairs or go down to the basement was just as thrilling as even sailing to America was for Columbus.

It was just as natural that you should be interested in your own body, and want to know some of the 'whys and wherefores' of that.

When you were very little, you were fascinated by the fact that your body gave off waste matter. You may not even remember those times at all, but I am sure at the time it seemed to you tremendously clever of you to have actually *made* something.

After all, that was the first thing you ever did make!

You were probably curious as to what it was and where it came from.

This interest in your own body naturally went on to interest in other people's. You wondered how other people looked under their clothes. It all seemed rather exciting and dangerous, certainly interesting.

Even while you were quite small, another deep instinct had begun to work in you – though not to anything like the extent that it does at the present time, as we shall see later.

Deep in your unconscious mind is the hereditary memory

of the generations of human beings who have reproduced their kind through union with the other sex.

So your first merely 'geographical' curiosity naturally developed even further into the first 'sex' curiosities.

These are perfectly natural stages of development, through which we all pass. If your parents were wise, they were able to help you with information given in terms you could understand, in a frank, casual way.

On the other hand, there are many grown-up people – in fact most excellent people, who love their children and want to do the best for them – who find it hard to answer such questions.

There are several reasons for this:

1. They have forgotten their own childhood. They no longer remember how intensely interesting these things are even to quite a small child.
2. Therefore they fear the child is showing interest too soon in matters it will learn later on.
3. They themselves were not sensibly brought up as children. Therefore they have an excessive feeling of shame in connexion with their body and its workings. This feeling of shame they try to hide under sharpness or evasion. It shows also in their embarrassment when asked such questions.

You may wonder why in 3 I used the words 'excessive shame'.

I did that purposely, because I have a theory that anything which we always do alone or in secret (like ridding our bodies of waste matter or reproducing our kind) does cause us a certain amount of embarrassment when it comes to open discussion.

This is because of the very fact that it is only in privacy that these things are done.

Some uneasiness in discussing them is therefore not unnatural. What is unnatural, and harmful, is the *excessive* feeling of shame and even guilt, in connexion with these very ordinary things, which was taught to the last few generations by their own parents and teachers.

All children have their natural curiosity about their own bodies and other people's. At the risk of repeating myself, I want to make it quite clear that that in itself is not a bad thing.

Without curiosity, the wish to know more and find out about things, the child would not develop, any more than mankind would have developed without the same qualities.

You very probably remember such incidents in your own childhood. Your furtive curiosity – furtive because you had already been given the impression by grown-ups that there was something secret and shameful in the things you wanted to know. And your feeling of shame when you were made to feel that your interest was somehow a guilty interest.

Such excessive feelings of guilt and shame in connexion with matters about which you had a perfectly natural curiosity, may well have done you harm.

Being unable to accept that guilty feeling, you probably tried to forget the incident as quickly as you could, and even pretend it never happened.

Perhaps you tried to see what a grown-up person's body was like, or tried to compare your own with that of a playmate. You may have been punished, or made by some remark to feel dirty and wicked. Even if you were not then found out, the mere fact that you knew you were doing something which would have brought punishment if discovered left you with the same feeling of guilt.

We all of us have incidents of this kind deep-buried in our memory, unless we were very, very fortunate indeed in our parents and teachers.

One grown woman I know still remembers something which happened when she could not have been older than about six.

An uncle of whom she was very fond had come back from a long sea voyage during the night. She wanted to see him – quite naturally and affectionately, without in this case any thought at all of the kind of curiosity we are discussing.

She went to the room where he was asleep, just managed to turn the door-handle and let herself in.

At that moment her mother came into the room and found her there. She was carried out of the room, and a great fuss was made because she had gone into it.

She was not punished, because her parents understood that she had no wish except to meet her uncle again. What they did not understand was the impression left by their fuss upon her young mind.

They laughed and joked about the matter while the child was listening.

Suppose the uncle had not been in bed? What if he had been dressing? They laughed a good deal about it.

Hearing all this, not really understanding, the tiny girl gained the impression that there must be something secret and shameful about seeing people undressed.

In this case, that impression did not even arise out of her own curiosity, but was put into her head by the thoughtless talk of her elders.

Although the incident was so small, and happened so long ago, that child now become a woman has never forgotten it, or the deep mark which was left in her mind.

Now my object in telling you all this – which to those of you who had extra-wise parents will all seem rather silly, or very obvious – is twofold.

It will help you to understand, in dealing with younger brothers and sisters now, and later on with your own

children, never to do anything which will cause a young child to feel ashamed of his natural curiosity.

Even if the child's question comes at an awkward moment, or before strangers, accept it casually and calmly. Give sufficient explanation, in simple terms which the child, according to his age, will understand.

Secondly, look back into your own childhood and remember so far as you can any occasions when your own natural curiosity was thrust back at you by a thoughtless adult in such a way as to leave you always with a feeling that you should not have done such a thing, or asked such a question.

Have a good look at those memories. Then make up your mind that you will no longer be afraid, ever, to look them in the face.

There is nothing about the body, or the way it works, of which you need feel ashamed or which need embarrass you.

Goodness knows, there have been millions enough of such bodies, all with the same functions, since the beginning of time!

On the other hand, do not fall into the temptation, because your mind is freed from foolish embarrassments, to horrify your elders by making loud bald statements about natural functions.

If you need to tell the world how superior you are in your new freedom of mind, there must still be a few of the old shames left, or you would not bother.

I know it is rather fun to horrify, but there is another side to it.

These things are not generally talked about in society except when necessary, for two reasons.

1. If it is not necessary, why bother to talk about something which should be generally accepted?
2. Such talk may cause real embarrassment to people

who have not been brought up in so enlightened a way as yourself.

One of the signs of consideration for others – which is the foundation of all real good manners, as distinct from mere convention – is not to cause people embarrassment if you can avoid it, however silly their ideas may seem to you.

CHAPTER XX

Going to school: Why do we have to go?; learning to work and play – *Were you unhappy at school? – The 'forward' and the 'backward' child:* The mushroom and the oak – *School to-day and to-morrow:* Does the educational system need revision?; put up with the present, alter the future

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Going to school

I wonder if you hated school, or if you loved it, or whether you just 'muddled through' because you had to go anyway, and therefore made the best of it.

Many of us like it while we are little, but begin to resent it by the time we get to the upper forms and feel that we want to get out and earn our own living.

Others hate it while they are little, and then take to the greater freedom which they are allowed as seniors.

Why do we have to go to school, anyway?

I think there are two main reasons.

One is fairly obvious. If you are to earn your own living, a sound education will give you the necessary equipment.

There are other reasons too. Education will also equip you to spend your leisure hours in interesting ways. If you were unable to read, lots of amusing and informative books would be right out of your reach. As for music, art, theatre, ballet and so on – you would miss the best enjoyment of them because your mind would not have been trained to appreciate them.

Things like stamp-collecting and archaeology – and many

other subjects in which people interest themselves – require a background of formal education before you can get very far in understanding them.

There is, however, one other big reason why schooldays are necessary to us: it is there that we learn to become members of a still wider community than the family.

You see, to become citizens we need gradually to pass through stages in which our world becomes wider and wider. It is really quite a sensible arrangement that after having begun to realize that we are part of a family we should go on to find ourselves as members of the school community.

The experience gained in this way helps us to pass by gradual stages into citizenship of our country, and of the world.

When you went to school you came up against certain hard facts.

At home, you were in most cases sure of affection – so sure, that it was something you expected as of right.

At school, if you wanted friendship it was necessary to put yourself out to get it, by being friendly to others, accepting their points of view and sometimes putting your own self-will on one side if it did not fit in with the wishes of the rest.

Sometimes it takes individuals a very long time to understand that in the world they must not expect to receive friendship unless they show that they are willing to give it.

Some of the loneliest people I know are the ones who – perhaps in the first instance because of excessive shyness – give an impression that they are not interested in the people they meet.

In that case, the persons they meet will not be interested in them, and they will go on being lonely!

It is the old story that you cannot go on taking without giving. In making friendships you must show from the

beginning that you are ready to 'give' – you will understand that I do not mean here to give *things*, but to give *friendship*.

Were you unhappy at school?

You may not have found it easy in the beginning to get used to going to school, after the security of your home and the smallness of the group of people you were used to.

Possibly you still have unhappy memories of school, for this reason.

In that case, you can only try now to look back and work out the reasons for that unhappiness, and try to undo any harm which may have been done to you through it.

You see, like the little boy who reacted against his mother's neglect by making up his mind not to love her, and in later life became unable to love anybody – in just the same way, someone who has been friendless at school may condemn himself to go friendless through life.

Since our growth as human beings depends to a very large extent upon our contact with other people and the things we learn through them, such a person will lose many opportunities to live a full life.

Sometimes children at school suffer because they are 'forward', or because they are 'backward'. That is to say, their intelligence may be beyond or behind the average for their years. Whichever is the case, their character is likely to suffer.

If you were a backward child you will probably be surprised to hear that the forward child – who seemed to you so enviable – suffered by his forwardness. If you were a forward child you will probably by this time know it for yourself – even if, as yet, for reasons of pride, you have not admitted it.

You see, in a school you have a large number of children divided roughly according to age into different classes or forms. But children of the same age may vary very widely in development, both intellectual and emotional.

So you may get a position – indeed, I think you always do – when the 'backward' children are struggling to keep up, and the 'forward' ones are forging on ahead.

The teachers, if they are wise, try to sort this out a bit. Some children go up to higher classes even while quite young. Others may remain in lower classes, although older than their companions.

Does that solve the problem, though?

No. Unhappily, it very often sets new problems going.

The 'forward' and the 'backward' child

Do you remember how you felt when you found yourself promoted high above your age in a top form – or when you found yourself kept down with children younger than yourself?

Whichever your experience was, you will see for yourself if you remember hard enough the effect this happening had on you.

You were put up higher than your age warranted: my goodness, you felt no end of a fine fellow. You probably showed off at home about it, and felt superior at school.

If the other pupils got the idea that you were 'putting on airs', you may soon have found yourself with very few friends.

The natural result of that was that you tried to tell yourself you did not care – so as not to be hurt – and so got more out of the swim than ever.

Probably by now, especially if you have gone on to a

secondary school, you have found out that you are not the only clever person in the world.

In a small school, whose children are drawn from a small area, you may be a big bright star, and get the idea that you are the only one in the sky. But when you get to central or secondary school, with the pick of the brains of a far wider area, you find very often just how wrong you were.[1]

Now although that discovery may be painful at first, in the long run it is a darned good thing for you – that is, if you have common sense enough to learn from the lesson. For in the world there are cleverer people than you by far, and if you go out into life puffed up with the idea of your own cleverness, you have got some shocks coming.

If you are a clever young person, be thankful for your natural gifts, and regard them as just that – gifts, for which you should be grateful.

If you have cultivated those gifts by hard work, that is one up to you. On the other hand, ask yourself whether at the same time you have neglected cultivating your *character.*

Are you a friendly person? Able to get on with others without showing off and making them look small, when you know things which they do not? Or have the praises you got for prize-winning, etc. turned your head?

As we shall see later on, your attitude now, grown from your schooldays, may make or mar your chances when it comes to starting on your career.

There is nothing sadder than to see a young person of brilliant gifts who in the end gets nowhere because of faults

1. It should be understood that references in this and the next section to 'elementary', 'central' and 'secondary' schools refer to conditions before the Education Act, 1945, came into force – and under which many of my readers may have been educated.

It is at present too early, and the difficulties of post-war times are too unusual, for me to attempt to assess the changes which the next ten years may see. Let us hope they will be in the direction of more practical training for those who could benefit by it.

of character, which a little wisdom could have helped to modify while there was still time.

A word now for the 'backward' child.

It is very probable that you have suffered from being made to feel small, both in class and at home. You knew that your teachers, and more importantly your parents, expected you to make a good show. But somehow that did not seem to be possible.

You reacted in either of two ways.

You plodded along and did your best, but with the feeling all the time that you were not really likely to get anywhere because you were 'stupid'.

Or you thought: 'Blank all this. If I cannot make any impression by the way I do my lessons, at any rate I'll show 'em I don't care.' In which case you probably played Old Harry, and got the admiration of less spirited comrades by being as unruly as you dared.

Well, I feel a lot of sympathy with you. No one likes to be made to feel stupid. On the other hand, I think you may have been rather more stupid than you need, by reacting too far in either of these ways.

Some people develop much more slowly than others. You will find a parallel in every kind of life. The mushroom springs up in the night. The oak takes years to spread its branches and thrust down its deep roots.

The fact that you are a slow developer does not mean that you will never develop if you do not give up trying.

Remember the story of the Ugly Duckling? That should help the slow developers, and those young people worried by a secret fear that they are rather plain. Many of the best and most beautiful things go through a long stage of being nondescript before they reach their full development.

There is nothing to prevent you getting as far if not farther than so-called 'clever' children, if you keep on steadily and not let yourself get flustered or disheartened.

Do not be disheartened. And do not be so silly as to throw away your chances of getting somewhere by wasting your time in fooling around when you might be learning.

Mind you, that does not mean that there is any harm in a bit of fun. What good would life be at any age without it? A prig is just as unpleasant as a continual practical joker. But to footle away all your time is just throwing away your future.

So in school, as in later life too, do not let yourself be either cast down or thrown into revolt by the idea that you are any less clever than anyone else. You may just be a late-developing plant! So give yourself the benefit of the doubt.

In the same way, if you have always been bright, do not run away with the idea that you are a brilliant exception in a world of very dull people. Make the most of your gifts, but cultivate humility too, realizing that out of all the millions of people in the world there must be at least one million just as clever as you.

I have spoken to both the 'forward' and the 'backward' child. Now that of the 'average' one, who always seems to settle about midway up the form list, and is competent though not outstanding in sports and games?

This is the one who is likely to be happiest, not being troubled with the same worries and miseries as those at the two extremes.

There is really only one big danger here – not to become complacent and self-satisfied. Set yourself a goal a little way ahead of what you have attained so far. There will be a tremendous satisfaction in reaching it, and a further spur in going ahead still a little more.

School to-day and to-morrow

Whether 'forward', 'backward' or 'average', it must from time to time have occurred to you, when you looked out at the sunshine beyond the classroom windows, to wonder why on earth you had to be cooped up learning text-book facts.

I agree that it does seem rather hard.

I do not think anyone considers that our present system of education is by any means ideal.

Great advances have been made in recent years, so that the very young child is introduced gradually into the school atmosphere and begins to learn through play. The days are gone when the tiny child was plunged at once into study.

Still, I should like to see a minimum of book-learning for the first few years of school. Just being with other children helps to teach us to live in a community – a lesson which is very useful for the future.

There is a great deal which might be altered, both in the way our schools are run, and in the things they teach.

For instance, both teachers and children would benefit if classes were smaller.

The teacher's job would be easier, and he would be able to give more personal attention to the special needs of each child. The child would benefit too, since he would not be either panting along behind the rest of a big class, or longing to get ahead on to something else.

But smaller classes mean more schoolrooms and more teachers, and the bare fact is that we have not got them. Nor are we likely to get them for a long time, owing to the setback from which as a nation we are suffering because of the war.

So we have to face facts as they are, and put up with them.

You may also have wished, when very young, that you had not to learn certain things by heart – the alphabet, multiplication tables and so on.

I agree it does seem silly at first sight. To give older children long lists of things to learn by heart is futile, doing no good at all and making them feel frustrated and annoyed.

But, you see, unless you learned certain basic things at the beginning, you could never go on to the subjects which are built up from them – like reading and arithmetic.

Then you might be quite unfit to earn your living and to enjoy your leisure.

The reason why these things must be learnt in this way early in schooldays is because it is much harder to commit things to memory later on. As we grow, we lose the parrot-memory which small children have.

By this time, I expect you can see for yourself why such things must be learned. But, you may ask, why learn Latin and algebra – things like that, which you will never probably use again?

I am very largely in agreement with you. The time will come when the aptitudes and inclinations of the individual child will be taken into consideration in deciding what kind of education he should have.

It is now possible to make use of mind-science to test and measure the kind of intelligence which each child has. When mind-science is applied to education, the child who will never benefit from learning certain subjects will not be made to waste his time on them. His education will be arranged to make the most of the capacities he has in other directions.

We must not, of course, go too far in this either. People concerned only with utility might argue that a manual

labourer did not actually need to learn to read and write. Then thousands of working people would be cut off from the leisure interests and opportunities to widen their minds which depend upon reading and writing.

We do not want to bring about the division of our people into a caste system!

It is not utility which should be the basis of our educational system so much as opportunity. Each child should have the opportunity to develop his own particular bent, while still gaining broad knowledge of life and scholarship as a whole.

The days when these questions will be argued out are as yet far away. Meanwhile, if you have passed on from elementary to central or secondary school, you probably find yourself forced to learn subjects like Latin and algebra even although you may have no interest in them or inclination to use them in later life.

The reason is that as yet our education is not directed to the needs of the individual. All must learn certain subjects because they may be useful to some.

You have to fit in with things as they are because there is no alternative – though there is nothing to stop you, later on, out of your own experience, trying to get things changed for future generations.

It is very easy to criticize, and sometimes very difficult to work out a solution which will be satisfactory in every respect.

It may interest you to know, for instance, that in recent years there have been a number of 'progressive' schools, run as an experiment, on very different lines from the ordinary school.

The children are not forced to try to learn any subject or indeed anything if they do not want to. There is no 'discipline' as you know it, and teachers and children live side by side as equals.

That sounds wonderful in theory – almost too good to be true. It has produced good results in some directions, but bad ones in others.

The children have grown up very self-reliant and ready to manage their own affairs, having had an equal share in the responsibility of running the school. But in very many cases life has forced them later to realize for themselves the handicap of their haphazard education.

You see, complete freedom to do as you like – whether that means merely being impertinent or smashing up the place – is not allowed to you in the world. If you get the idea in childhood that you can say or do just what you think, you are likely to be badly disillusioned later on.

When it comes to earning your own living, you may also find yourself far behind other people of your own age in subjects which have only just become interesting to you.

If you have been grounded in the essentials, you can easily go on with later studies. If not, it will be very difficult to start right from the beginning when you have lost that first 'parrot'-memory of childhood.

Personally, I do not think there is or will be a 'perfect' educational system in the world for a very long time to come – if ever.

Something is needed which will be a half-way house between the liberty to do nothing of the 'progressive' school, and the compulsion to learn subjects from which you personally will not benefit, of the ordinary school.

Since you, if you are still at school, must work under the existing system and probably take certain examinations if you are to have a reasonable start in life, you have no alternative for the time being but to make the best showing you can.

If you have gained from school life some idea of how to live in a community, and if the instruction you have received

will give you the chance to earn your living and have interesting leisure pursuits, you have done well enough with things as they are.

Where you feel your time has been wasted, or certain opportunities have been withheld, it is up to you to do your best later on to see that things are put right for others.

CHAPTER XXI

Work and pleasure: Picture-goer or bookworm?; keeping both mind and body fit – *Teachers as human beings:* Why play the fool?; can teachers and pupils reach understanding? – *Your friendships:* How do friends choose each other?; are you a show-off or a doormat? – *From friendship to first love:* Do you hate kissing your aunts?; the close friend of your own sex; your first real awareness of sex

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Work and pleasure

At the end of the last chapter I used the phrase 'interesting leisure pursuits'.

That is rather a high-falutin' phrase, but it is difficult to express exactly what I mean. The word 'hobbies' is not good enough. It sounds rather restricting, as if it meant only things like Meccano and stamp-collecting.

What I mean to imply is much more than that – the use of your leisure hours.

It is a very curious thing that people who work hardest and in work which does not really mean very much to them are usually the ones who do not know what to do with their spare time.

Of course, some people are quite happy doing a job which does not call for much mental effort. They will be comfortable in work which would drive others crazy – for instance, a routine job in a car assembly plant.

Perhaps you know how most manufactured goods are made nowadays.

Before last century almost everything used in daily life was made either by hand or with only very primitive instruments.

Cloth was hand-woven, and the weaver might take pride in his skill and in the lovely patterns he could produce. Furniture was delicately made by hand – which is the reason why to-day the work of great masters like Chippendale is widely sought after, for its age and beauty.

People took a personal interest in their work, and indeed it was itself like a hobby to them.

To-day, in the great majority of cases, that is all changed.

When a car is made, for instance, very many people are concerned. No one makes the car as a whole – except perhaps the designer, who sees it whole in his mind first.

Certain workers lay the 'foundations' of the car body. This is then carried along a moving pathway, along the sides of which stand a number of workers each interested only to add one small bit to the skeleton of the car.

As it passes along the band, the car takes shape. Yet all the workers along its path have no interest in it except to add their own small nut, bolt or other fitting – before turning their attention to the next car skeleton coming along, to which they will do exactly the same small thing they did to the one before it.

All day and every day.

From the manufacturers' point of view, this is a very much cheaper and faster way of turning out cars than if each were made lovingly with individual attention.

Some people are temperamentally made so that they can do repetitive work of this kind without becoming upset. They may even be glad not to have to make any great mental effort.

It may help them to go off on to their own private dreams – in which they are of course great heroes, or figures of romance, very different from their everyday selves.

Yet we frequently find that it is these very people whose daily work is dull who turn to manufactured pleasures for

their amusement. Mentally lazy in work, they sink into mental laziness even in pleasure.

Those people whose work is part of their life, on the other hand, are usually those who can make their own pastimes.

Now you may think that in discussing this question I have wandered some way from your own schooldays. Not really.

At school, you are in very much the same situation as the worker – either following a routine of which you cannot see the sense, or else taking a vivid interest in what you are doing.

How do you react from your attitude to school, during your free time?

Perhaps your own parents have sometimes 'got on' to you for going too much to the pictures. They may, on the other hand, have been heard to say that they wished you would take your nose out of your eternal books, and get out for some fresh air.

In each case there was something in what they said, though the way of their saying it was probably the last one which would work with you.

Do not think because they sometimes rile you by what you privately call 'nagging' that they are not sometimes right! Because they have not tact – or knowledge of mind-science – it does not mean that they are always wrong.

You see, it is rather a good thing to train yourself while you are still young not to rely entirely on manufactured pleasures.

I understand very well that after a grinding week at school you may like to go to the pictures on Saturday. And there is no harm in that.

The trouble starts when you spend all your leisure time on that and other manufactured pleasures. I will try to show you why.

You will remember how we saw that life had developed

on the earth from the first simple amoeba, only because of a continual *effort* towards a wider life.

The opposite holds good too. If any form of life ceases to use a limb or an organ, in time that organ will wither away. It becomes, as we say, atrophied.

If we never used our legs at all, and even in the house went round, say, sitting on a pair of roller skates, in time the human race would lose the use of its legs. In the end, legs themselves might very well cease to be, since their function was not exercised.

So with the person who is satisfied with a simple repetitive job which makes no demand on his intelligence. Unless he uses that intelligence in other ways it will – if not wither away entirely, at any rate become blunted like a knife which is not sharpened against steel.

So with yourself, in the business of living, if you form an early habit of taking your pleasure only in those directions which involve no physical or mental effort at all.

The eternal picture-goer is sitting back in his plush seat being spoon-fed like a baby with a lot of romantic ideas which he does not bother to think out for himself.

Gradually he loses the power to face real life (which is not at all 'good cinema') and also the power to work out his ideas for himself.

In another direction, equal danger lies in wait for the bookworm too. You can stimulate your mind with the ideas contained in books, but still have very little understanding of everyday life and people.

You can strengthen your mind and sharpen it against the minds of people who lived long ago, if you make wise choice of your reading. But at the same time your body needs exercise if it is to develop fully and in good health. Your practical sense needs exercise too.

You see, the whole job of living consists in finding a

natural balance. Work and Play. Rest-leisure and Constructive-leisure. Mental exercise, physical exercise and experience of life and people.

Youth is the time to start forming habits necessary for full development as an individual. There is really no better time than schooldays in which to start, since you have the opportunity for all these things if you like to take it.

Teachers as human beings

You are not alone in school, any more than you will be alone in the world. There are the teachers – who stand to you as a kind of super-parent – and there are your schoolmates, from among whom will come your first friends.

Teachers are a mixed lot. There is often great variation in their ways of teaching and in their attitude to the children they teach.

A bad teacher can make the most interesting subject sound dull, while a good one can encourage you and make you realize what fun it can be to learn.

It is a good thing for you to realize the humanity of your teachers now, because in later life you will have to deal with other people standing in a somewhat similar relation to you – the head of a firm, for instance, or the head of the department in which you work.

Not that such people will be there to teach – although when you first go to work you will have much to learn – but you will have to know the right attitude to take towards them, and be able to put up with their little personal queernesses without too much resentment or annoyance.

Heads of firms, and teachers, like parents, are human. They have their off-days, their troubles at home, their personal prejudices and 'blind spots', which may make them seem unnecessarily testy or unreasonable.

Very often they too, like some parents, are suffering from the effects of bad teaching and upbringing in their own youth.

Among teachers, these are the ones who seem endlessly strict and domineering, who have no sense of humour, or who try to cram you with facts without sufficient explanation.

In that case, it is you who must have the sense of humour, and see things as they really are. Do not become either rebellious or cast down under such a teacher. In the end, you can only hurt yourself, not them. Try instead to understand why it is that old So-and-so is so difficult.

It is very understandable for a boy who thinks a certain master has 'a down' on him to react rebelliously and start playing the fool in his lessons. Of course he wants to pay back what he thinks is unfairness, and up to a point I am all on his side.

There is this about it, though. It will only harm your own future in the long run, if you let yourself be put off a subject just in order to spite a master you do not like and who you feel does not like you.

Think to yourself that his pet corn must be worrying him, or his wife may be nagging again – and do not let yourself be forced into a position where you feel you must play him up in order to get your own back.

After all, he has got the upper hand for the time being – though not for always. You have got years ahead of you without him around – and years in which knowledge of his particular subject may be useful.

The same with the scholar who suffers from a master's sarcasm, or who genuinely cannot keep up with the rate at which the rest of the class is going through a lesson.

Do not be got down and discouraged; though I know there is nothing so hateful as being made to look small in front of others. There must be something very wrong with

a man who has to bolster up his own opinion of himself by baiting a pupil.

If you can rise above your temporary hurt and realize that, you will not let yourself be cast down, or flustered, but will peg along stolidly and in the end do as well as anyone else.

There is another thing to bear in mind. The teacher's lot, like the policeman's, is not always a happy one. It must often be very trying to someone who loves a subject and is well-informed in it to have to keep on going over the most elementary things, being met sometimes by wilful stupidity and mischief.

If a teacher's patience does go, it may be because your particular bit of stupidity or mischief is just the last straw at the end of a particularly trying day – so that you get the full weight of all the resentments which until then have been kept in.

In your relationship with your teachers, as later in life with employers and those senior to you in business, you should try to cultivate understanding, without being in the least subservient.

Your friendships

So we come to your friends.

Here, I think we can say that on the whole you choose your friends – or, rather, friends choose each other – along certain definite lines.

Your teachers, like your parents and very often your employers and business seniors, are usually given to you. But friends are drawn to each other, like lovers are in later years, because of certain definite laws of attraction.

You may be drawn to someone because you share the same interests: sports, books, collecting and so on.

You may attach yourself to someone because you admire in him qualities you would like to see in yourself: prowess in sports and lessons. In that case, you probably identify yourself with him in your own mind, so that his successes come in a vague way to seem as if they were yours.

The other way round – you may know that someone admires you in this way, so it gives you pleasure to let him be around.

Since friendships do not 'just happen', any more than later on 'falling in love' just happens, it may be as well to look into yourself and find out what it is in you that interests your different friends, and makes you interested in them.

For instance, you may be a bit of a dare-devil, and 'assert yourself' by getting into all kinds of mischief. No harm in that, up to a point.

But if your chief friends are a weaker type, who admire you for doing what they do not dare to do, and egg you on, you may find yourself going much further than you mean to, and really more than you should – just in order to live up to their expectations and make them admire you the more.

In that way you may be encouraged into some really bad scrape which will cause real trouble. Worse, having tasted admiration – which is always pleasant to all of us – you may find yourself wanting it excessively, so that you go through life trying to get it at all costs.

If you surround yourself only with people whom you and they know not to be your equals in natural gifts, you will also lose the benefit which would come from matching yourself against people as brilliant and daring as yourself.

Without competition you will become egotistical and over-confident. If this is your temptation, ask yourself why it is that you cannot face competition, and always have to bolster yourself up with the easy admiration of your juniors.

The same error into which fall the first-class athlete and the daring ringleader of mischief waits also for the 'clever' young person.

Having discovered that he can get himself admired by less clever friends, he will develop the habit of 'showing-off' and become a positive bore. Only those who feel themselves to be of an inferior quality and need someone to look up to will be bothered with him then – if anyone will.

The schoolboy with a strong personality, especially if he has physical strength as well, will find that the attitude of his weaker friends positively encourages him to develop into a kind of little dictator – bringing out all the bullying traits which he should by the time he reaches the teens be trying to amend.

So, you see, on the whole we tend to choose our friends according to our own natures, either from among those who admire us, or those we can admire.

But except between people of equal qualities and attainments, this is not a good basis either for friendship or for love.

If we choose from among those who admire us, we must be very careful not to let their admiration – and our own desire for more of it – encourage us to develop our physical, mental or character strength along lines which will be harmful to us in the end.

If we choose from among those whom we can admire, in the sense that we make 'heroes' of them, we must watch out that we do not leave all positive action to them and content ourselves with becoming mere drifters.

From friendship to first love

You will remember that one of the first needs of the baby is love. As you grow, that need never leaves you. It finds

its expression in family affection, in friendship, and at last in the love between man and woman.

As you reach the teens, you may pass through a stage in which any expression of affection seems silly to you. You probably revolted against having to kiss your aunts and uncles, both because the 'duty kiss' seemed meaningless, and because it embarrassed you.

We nearly all pass through this stage, though most of us go back on it a bit later on, when we become less downright in our ideas. When we find out that our mother, for instance, does really care for this sign of love from her children, we compromise with our opinion for her sake, and give her the dutiful peck which seems to make her happy!

Only when we are quite grown-up do we really realize what it means to a mother to stand aside – as indeed a good mother should – and let her older children live their own lives and make their own mistakes, beyond her power to save them from heartache.

When we do realize this, it becomes worthwhile to make a few little sacrifices of our opinions in order to give her an innocent pleasure.

At about the same time as the revolt from 'duty kisses', most boys tend to regard girls as 'soppy' and refuse to have anything to do with them. The girls sometimes react the same way!

That is because the sex instinct which is born in us all is beginning to stir in its place of hiding, where it has been since your birth.

Your first reaction is to be rather frightened of it, because – without knowing why – you have the vague feeling that something is going on inside you which is going to be important, and yet which you do not understand.

So you react against it, becoming aware of the existence of the other sex and of the meaning of outward shows of

affection – the first reaction being against the impulse which has come to you so naturally.

Yet the need for affection is deep and growing in you. You may mock at it, but it is there – a natural and inevitable human need. Indeed, the more you mock, the stronger it must be inside you.

So it often comes about that in the stage between childhood and man- or womanhood, boys and girls form very close friendships with members of their own sex – or have a 'hero-worship' for a master or mistress, which comes to much the same thing.

You will remember how we saw that many early forms of life were two-sexed, each creature being not either male or female, but both.

The division of the sexes was finally adopted by Nature as the best means to secure variation of offspring through the blending of the characteristics of two lines of ancestors.

Yet there remain throughout Nature traces of this old two-sexed manner of life.

When a child is born there is no way to identify it as a boy or a girl, except by examining the external reproductive organs. But for the fact that the tiny boy has a tiny penis, there is nothing in the outside form of his body to distinguish it from a baby girl's.

There is, however, in the baby girl, so tiny as hardly to be visible, the root of what would have been a penis had she been going to develop into a boy. Just as the baby boy, as the grown man, has the breast nipples which would have been useful had he developed into a girl while in the womb.

So, you see, each of us has a tiny dose of the physical make-up of the other sex in us. We also have varying amounts of the emotional make-up of the other sex within our character.

Throughout childhood, though we are unaware of it, our sex is working within us, very quietly but very surely. The

inherited memory of generations of motherhood turns the little girl to her dolls. The inherited memory of past ages of hunting and fighting inclines the little boy to his rougher games.

Then, at the beginning of the teens, the sex instinct begins to work faster and more strongly. For a short time both the male and the female elements in each of us are stimulated to greater strength.

We therefore go through a phase when we may have deep affection for friends of either sex. This is not a sexual love, since we are not yet fully developed and equipped for sexual love; but because human love and human sexuality are so closely connected it is likely to be strongest when the sex instinct is beginning to become fully active.

It is a quite natural development for girls or boys in the teens to form close affections among themselves – girls with girls, boys with boys – or 'hero-worships' for teachers of their own sex.

A lot of harm is done by parents and teachers who do not understand this, and who put it into the heads of their children that there is something 'unhealthy' in such friendships.

If at the age of 12 to 16 you had a close friend of your own sex for whom you had great affection, there is no harm in that, since it was the natural result of the stage of development you had reached.

The reason why your parents or teachers may have reacted strongly against such a close friendship was similar to the reason why – as explained in Chapter XIX – they may have punished you very severely for childish stealing.

For if you should continue after the teens having friendships only with members of your own sex, that would mean that something had happened to prevent your going on with normal development. It was their worry lest this should happen which made them react harshly, and mistakenly –

since their harshness might have brought about the very result they were seeking to avoid.

If a young person learns the facts of sex in a shocking, instead of a natural way – and thus or through some other bruise to the mind gains a wrong outlook on the whole subject – he can get stuck at the stage of having friends only of his own sex. This kind of behaviour is known by the name of homosexuality.

This is a great pity, indeed a tragedy, since it may prevent his ever being able to find happiness in life.

Provided that the 'close friendships' or 'hero-worship' stage does not go on too long, and is not too intense, there is no need for parents, teachers, boys or girls to worry.

After the first reaction against girls, or boys, as the case may be, the next stage is to 'switch over' and begin to seek out friends of the other sex.

CHAPTER XXII

On becoming a man or woman: What have you learned so far? – *Sex life in human beings:* Body, mind and spirit – *Problems of adolescence:* The developing body; menstruation and 'wet dreams'; is masturbation dangerous?; sex and love

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On becoming a man or woman

Now we reach what for some people is rather a difficult stage. I do not know how you have found it.

Of course, if you had a happy home and wise parents, and were taught to understand in advance what the stages of growth of the human being should be, you have probably sailed along very smoothly.

Unfortunately, though, many young people start on the period of development from childhood to manhood without any notion what to expect, and therefore find things very strange.

I think at this point I had better make an apology to the young ladies: possibly, from time to time, in the earlier parts of this book, you may have been slightly piqued by my use of words like 'he' or 'manhood', when I might very well have put 'she' or 'womanhood'.

I am sure you will understand that I meant both, though it gets very wearisome to read sentences in which the alternatives are stated side by side all the way through.

I mean no slur upon womanhood by including it in the general term of 'manhood'. It is just that I want to avoid wearisome repetition – and perhaps, as a man, I have some sort of bias which makes me think in terms of manhood first!

Anyway, as you will see later on, my use of the masculine term does not mean either that I regard a woman's function in life as inferior, or that I have forgotten her value in the scheme of things.

So please accept this as a general apology and explanation.

Now, returning to our discussion of the adolescent stage which some young people find so difficult to live through – we have seen how from babyhood the primitive instincts of self-preservation, self-assertion, need for love, companionship and knowledge, have been working in you.

In the main, they have had good results. You have grown, learned and developed. But sometimes, unless you have been fully aware how they might lead you astray if not controlled, these same instincts have caused you some bother.

They have led you into quarrels, lies and petty thefts such as we have all committed at some time or other.

You have spent your childhood discovering that:

1. You are You.
2. There are Other People besides You with equal right to live and be happy.
3. There is a fascinating world around You to be explored.
4. This world contains the accumulated knowledge of many centuries which is interesting to examine.
5. There are friendship and love in the world to be given and taken.
6. You can win admiration by success and be discouraged by failure.

The ways in which you have made these discoveries have deeply affected your character. In some ways the effect may have been a bad one.

It is up to you to take stock of yourself, and put right any little 'twists' life has made in you, *now*. It will be very much more difficult, and perhaps even too late, later on.

You have come to the time when the sex instinct, which since birth has been slowly growing and working in you, is commencing its full activity. It is making itself felt now in a number of ways, some of which may be causing you various inner problems.

Before we go further into this matter, I think it might be well if you stopped reading here for a moment. Turn back and look through the chapter on the Reproductive System again.

Sex life in human beings

You will see that I said there that with human beings there are several things involved in sexual life.

There is the purely physical need for union with a member of the other sex, which normally leads to having children.

There is the 'emotional' aspect, which does not exist to any very great degree in animals. This makes it necessary to the ordinary human being to love their partner as well as desire them.

There is also the 'character' aspect. If a man and woman are going to live together, the relationship between them, and whether or not they are happy in it, does profoundly affect the development of their characters. Some people would call this the 'spiritual' aspect.

So you will see that when sex begins to work more strongly in you at the time called 'adolescence', it is no wonder if it disturbs your very innermost self.

Your body, emotions and character are all involved.

Problems of adolescence

Until this time, your body's main concern has been to grow. From the tiny creature which issued from the womb you have now become as big as, if not bigger than, your own mother and father.

Now your body is directing its growing-power to new ends: to complete you and fit you for full adult life. The pubic hair which is the sign of sexual maturity begins to grow. The feminine breasts and the masculine penis make themselves ready for their natural work. The boy's voice breaks and deepens into the voice of a man.

These things happen at different ages with different people. There is absolutely no definite rule. They may begin at about 11, or may not start until about 15 or 16. Usually, they happen with girls a little earlier than with boys.

There is no need at all to worry if you are late-developing in this sense, any more than if you are late-developing intellectually or in any other way. Nature is taking her time, that is all.

I very much hope that you personally were told in advance what to expect. It is very silly and causes needless worry to leave children in ignorance of the natural stages of growth which they should expect.

I remember one little girl who at the age of 11 began to be aware of some peculiar feelings in her chest – a kind of ache. No one would tell her what it was, neither her parents nor even the school doctor. They all said it was 'nothing'.

But how could it be nothing? She very naturally and logically asked herself, beginning in her ignorance to think of all the diseases of which she had never heard, which might begin in this way.

There was of course nothing at all *wrong* with her. As her

sex instinct began its vital work, her body was very gradually beginning to develop from the body of a child into the body of a woman.

The breast glands which are necessary to a woman's womanly life were beginning to become active. In a couple of years' time the vague sensation of discomfort was a thing of the past, and her figure had gained its natural rounded form.

Why should a child be worried, and perhaps come to think there is something wrong with him, just because some grown-up people have not the common sense to explain what is going on? For boys, too, as well as girls, have their similar problems.

On the whole, the boys' problems are not so immediate as the girls', because their ripening into adult life is more slow and gradual.

When the first menstruation – or monthly flow of blood – arrives, a girl naturally feels that this event marks her transition from girl to woman. The boy does not have so definite a date to mark his manhood – though some of them look upon their first real shave in a similar way!

Sometimes girls are silly enough to resent this difference between themselves and the boys. Why, they ask, should they be bothered with this regular and inevitable discomfort, while the boys stride about robust and carefree?

If you do not mind my saying so, I do not think this is the most sensible way to look at it.

A girl whose breast-glands have developed into their full beauty and usefulness, and whose menstruation has endowed her with the power to become a mother, should feel her breast also swell with pride.

To her has been given a blessing which no man can know – the opportunity to become not only wife but mother. So you can afford to be tolerant of those arrogant boys.

You will get nothing in life without giving. The small

discomforts of the womanly life are only the price to be paid for the tremendous fulfilments of motherhood, from which man is debarred.

I hope that you, if you are a girl, were not allowed to reach your first menstruation without knowledge of what to expect. Girls who have grown up in ignorance are often severely frightened when this natural event takes place for the first time.

This shock, together with the very wrong idea that there is something shameful in this natural function, can cause a girl to suffer unnecessary physical pain as well as mental distress.

You will remember how we have seen that the human mind and body work very closely together. The girl whose mind has been injured by the shock of an unexpected first menstruation, or who has an unhealthy attitude towards it, may find that her body is affected by her state of mind. Then she may suffer pain at those times.

Of course, when menstruation first starts some girls may find that they have a slightly excessive flow of blood, or too much discomfort. This may persist only while the body is 'settling down' to its new work.

Yet it may very well also be the result of the attitude of mind. If this is your case, you should realize how natural and right this function is, which you share with every woman who has ever lived. There is no need for any shame or fear to be attached to it.

Now for the boys: Manhood does not come to you with quite the sudden signs which girls receive. Yet things may happen from time to time to trouble you.

Usually it will be what is called a 'wet dream'.

During the night, the fluid which contains your masculine seed, and which is manufactured in the testicles, may be expelled from your body through the penis.

Sometimes you may have a strange dream while this is

happening. Sometimes you may wake up without remembering anything at all.

This is simply a sign that Nature is beginning to work in you. She is, if you like, 'testing out' the apparatus she has made, as you test an engine before it goes into use.

When this happens to you – as with the girls when they reach menstruation – there is nothing to worry about. On the contrary, you would have much more need to worry if it never happened!

Do not, however, think that when this has happened to you that you are thereby completely fitted to take up the role of lover, husband and father.

We cannot say at exactly what point a boy or girl is sexually ripe. The process of development is very gradual. Also, as we shall see later, there are a number of reasons why we do not start an active sexual life immediately our bodies are ready. Our minds and emotions have to be ready too. This does not all necessarily take place at the same time.

Sometimes a boy will find that the sexual organ itself will put in a little practice at getting erected in the way described in the chapter on the Reproductive System.

He may feel ashamed of this, even though he knows that it has happened without his will. Certain books, pictures, or the talk of thoughtless comrades, may have had a sexually stimulating effect.

Do not be made miserable by thinking, if these things should happen, that there is anything wrong or sinful in you.

The inherited memory in your unconscious mind, of the generations of sexual reproduction which have produced you, together with the new stirrings of sex in your own body, are working together to fit you for manhood.

It is normal and ordinary, and 'nothing to write home about'. Do not let other boys make the thing dirty for you

by talking and joking about it in a furtive and smutty way. They are only showing their own ignorance and lack of understanding of the wholesome ways of Nature.

So far I have mentioned the sex activities in which your will plays no part at all. These have probably come to you, as they have to everyone else, in the ordinary course of events.

We come now to one sex activity which, again, happens to almost everyone, but in which to a certain extent your will is involved.

Some children, at quite an early stage, may discover by touching their reproductive organs that in this way they can experience a certain sensation of pleasure.

There is in fact no reason at all why you should not touch any part of your body. Everyone has got one. They are all very similar, along the two patterns of male and female. And no part is any less clean and admirable than the others.

Yet there is the fact, discovered by many children, that the touching of the reproductive organs may cause a feeling which cannot be induced anywhere else.

This causing of a sensation is known by the name of masturbation.

No young person can be blamed for making such a discovery. Why should we not explore, whether the world or our bodies? It is natural for a child to wonder what its organs are for, since life consists all the time of reaching out for knowledge.

Some parents and teachers, however, feel that there is something very wrong about this kind of activity. They often sincerely believe that something very terrible will happen to their child as a result.

They reprimand him, or express their anger – being worried for his sake – in such a way that he is made to feel that he has committed a terrible crime.

Yet the truth is that masturbation, where it takes place, is only a phase of growth. It will pass away, like other phases which we have noted.

It has no ill effects, physical or mental – except those bruises which may be caused to the young mind when the child, being or fearing to be reprimanded, is made to have a feeling of guilt and shame.

This is not a moral question at all, but one of common sense, so I should like to speak directly to the boy or girl who may have made this discovery of the physical sensations latent in their reproductive organs.

If the sex instinct is already so grown-up in you that you have done this, and continue to do it, in response to a strong urge – do not suffer mental misery thinking that you have done something wrong.

It is not *wrong*, but for certain reasons it is something you might make an effort to do without.

We have to restrain many impulses which are normal enough in themselves. It might be 'normal' to release the waste material from your body immediately you felt the need, wherever you were – but you would not be very popular if you went around doing it.

Similarly, masturbation may be regarded as quite 'normal', but it is wise and healthy to consider the reasons for doing your best to refrain.

Our minds and bodies very quickly accustom themselves to habit. Once you start smoking, you may very well wish you never had, it is so difficult to stop.

The same with this. If it is done too often you may find later that you have become so addicted to it that you cannot enjoy normal sexual life as you should.

Though it may give you some little pleasure now, it is not a habit you want to endure all your life, with the hope of real love and marriage before you.

Linked with this, there is the question of self-control.

This is a most desirable strength, and one which can be gained only by practice.

To attempt self-control – without making a moral issue of it, or being humbled to the dust when you lapse – will be a good discipline for your will.

It is an amazing thing that frequently in this world men who are fair and above-board in business think that any kind of cheating and treachery will do when it comes to love affairs.

People who believe in and practise self-control in every other department of life, make sexual life the exception.

How often do we hear that 'being in love' excuses all kinds of villainy and wrong-doing, from outright murder to breaking up a couple of peaceful homes?

In my opinion, this is a novelettish and cheap-film point of view, which does more harm in the world to-day than almost anything else.

There is no reason at all why the rules of honour and decency should not obtain as completely in sexual life as in business and social life – indeed, I think there is much MORE reason.

They can only be observed where the human being has himself fully 'in hand', as we say. That is why it may do you good to begin now to get your sexual impulses under some control.

On the other hand, if you have sought the pleasurable sensation of masturbation not from any strong inner urge, but with the definite intention beforehand of setting up an artificial excitement in yourself – then you have been, not wrong, but foolish.

The happiness of a real union is so much greater than the little thrill caused in this way that you are robbing yourself of pure satisfaction in the real thing when it comes.

If you have never done it, I should not begin, for the reasons which I have given in the last couple of pages.

Never lose sight of the fact that a merely physical thrill cannot compare with full sexual experience.

Human beings are so made that the physical side of sex is only one part of their adult life. Emotional and character sides are just as important.

You do not want to be *alone* in any sense in your sexual life. To be united with another person means that each of you brings to the other something they lack.

Men and women are different. Men have physical strength, but they need the softness and comfort their wives bring to the home – just as, when babies, they needed to cuddle into the warmth of their mother's breast.

Women need to be able to rely upon their men's support and protection, if they are to find full fulfilment in a home of their own.

Neither is complete, physically, emotionally, or in character, without learning something from the other: in love given and taken, and in sexual experience richer than in any other form of life because it can take place on all those three planes – not on the physical plane alone.

CHAPTER XXIII

Are you yet fully man or woman?: Should you have sexual experience yet? – *Experience inside and outside marriage:* Why marriage exists; the reasons behind the conventions; the unmarried mother and her child; woman more emotionally involved in sex; sex outside marriage – *The dangers of casual 'affairs':* Venereal diseases – *What should you do?:* Why can't you marry now?; reasons why marriages fail; a later choice of partner may be better

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Are you yet fully man or woman?

So far, we have traced your development from conception to the interesting period known as adolescence – with special reference in the last stages to the sex instinct of which you are now becoming aware.

In the earlier part of your life, physical growth was the most important thing. Mental growth followed. Now sexual growth has taken over the chief role.

But – have we left something out? What about character growth?

That of course goes on throughout life, or has the possibility of doing so unless we ourselves prevent it by refusing to learn. I believe that even more than any other, it can be the one process which need never stop.

For character 'grows' all the time, as a result of our experience of life and the use to which we put it.

We do find, however, on the whole, that the main trend of a person's character tends to become set by the time he reaches manhood. Yet there remains plenty of scope for change, if the understanding and will are there.

Even so, character development is one of the slower

processes. So we come to a problem which may have occurred to you, now that you find yourself completely man or woman in the physical sense – that is to say, with the power to be united to a member of the other sex, and perhaps produce a child.

Are you yet completely man or woman in the sense that you are 'ripe' to have sexual experience? Why, if your body is ready, does society as yet frown upon any attempt to use it in this particular way?

Most young people who are sexually inexperienced have a certain reluctance and shyness. They wonder what the experience is like, but rather hang back from finding out.

There are several reasons for this. There is the natural fear of the unknown, the very real modesty which is a lovely trait in young people, and the influence of our upbringing.

In a young woman there is also a certain strong restraint which does not exist to the same extent in a young man, because of the fact that sexual life has greater real importance for her than for him.

Woman has been specially chosen by Nature, and her body and character are formed and influenced by that fact, to play a special role in the world – the role not only of wife but also of mother.

Because of this special role, which no man is privileged to share, her emotions are far more deeply involved.

Nature has therefore been both clever and kind in implanting in the young woman natural hesitations in embarking on sexual life. For should she make an error in her early choice of partner she may be very bitterly hurt, and her whole attitude to life become badly warped.

For reasons which I will try to make clear in a minute, it would not be a good thing if every young person rushed into sexual experience as soon as he was physically ready.

On the other hand, I understand very well that the matter interests and concerns you deeply. You may, especially if

you are in love, sometimes have asked yourself what good reason there is beyond 'stuffy' convention, why you should hold back.

Experience inside and outside marriage

It is not the case that marriage is a thing imposed upon us from outside, either by the State or by the Church.

Certainly, the society in which we live says very emphatically that we may not express ourselves sexually except within marriage – and imposes very heavy penalties (not in law, so much as in fact) on those who do otherwise.

The reason, however, arises from within the nature of mankind itself.

It is true that some people say they see no reason why they should not have complete freedom in their sexual life. Yet in every department of life, the first thing we have to learn is that we cannot have complete freedom to do what we like.

Our natural urges and impulses have to be disciplined, both for our own sakes and for the sakes of others. Why should sex alone be made an exception to this law – especially when it is possible by selfish sexual behaviour to inflict cruel wrong upon other people?

A man's sexual impulse is usually more selfish than that of a woman. He can feel sexual desire without necessarily experiencing love for the woman, and certainly without having any 'paternal' instinct comparable to the 'maternal' instinct in his partner.

In a sense, Nature has little use for man. After he has served her purpose in planting the seed of a new life, he is not indispensable. It is the mother who is truly indispensable to her child. For this reason, the woman's sexual feelings are closely bound up with mother-instinct.

A sexual instinct which seeks only a physical gratification is therefore a selfish impulse. It does not take into account the needs and rights of the partner, or of society as a whole.

Yet the whole basis of our human existence, the one thing which we pride ourselves upon as distinguishing us from lower orders of life, lies in our recognition of our rights and duties as members of the human family.

Marriage, therefore, exists as the outcome of our belief that it is always necessary to exercise control of our primitive instincts in the interests of the society in which we live.

It exists also in answer to the need, which lies deep in almost every man and woman, for a relationship which shall be not only physical, but also mental and spiritual.

It exists also because the child needs two parents and a secure home if it is to have a good opportunity to develop into a happy and healthy person.

So far as you yourself are concerned, the reason why it is better to exercise control and abstain from sexual life until marriage are both practical and spiritual.

One reason is the purely practical one that sexual experience may lead to the birth of a child. Few young men in their teens are able to provide for a wife and child. They may well find such a responsibility a severe handicap in the early stage of their career.

A young man who is so childishly irresponsible as to refuse to face this situation when he has helped to cause it may also be turning his back upon a very real tragedy. A young girl who is left to provide for her child by herself will find life very hard indeed.

Society has decided that children shall not be born except in marriage. Do not scoff at that as just the kind of silly superstition which asks to be defied.

I agree that with some narrow-minded people, who mistake the means for the end, this social law has degenerated

into a kind of superstition. But that does not mean that it was not originally founded on very practical grounds.

Certainly, mistakes which are made through passion or in genuine love are understandable and forgivable. People who sneer at unmarried mothers as a class are being very shortsighted and unkind. Often the unmarried mother is just an unhappy girl who has made a mistake for which she will have to pay perhaps for the rest of her life.

But there is reason behind the generally accepted morality.

Not only the 'practical' but also the 'spiritual' reason.

You will very readily understand the deep scar which will be left on a girl's mind if the man to whom she has entrusted herself betrays and deserts her. This may affect her whole future attitude to the other sex, and warp her outlook and her life.

That warping will probably be passed on to her child, since the way in which she brings him up will be influenced by her own feelings both towards him and towards sex.

Because the purpose for which a woman's body and emotional being are formed is motherhood, sex is far more important as a factor in her life than it is in the life of a man.

It is possible for a man to have a sexual experience which means nothing to him emotionally, and is in fact no more than the satisfaction of an appetite.

There are women like this too; but with the great majority, sexual life has for a woman a deep emotional significance. She will not usually want or enjoy a sexual experience unless her emotions are deeply involved.

Men and women should both realize this fundamental difference between the sexes. If they do not, a man may easily wrong a woman deeply because he does not realize how important to her is something which for him is only a passing incident. A woman may throw away all her

happiness and peace of mind, because she has not understood and made allowances for the man's lighter approach to sexual life.

You will see that understanding of this difference between man and woman involves both man and woman in certain responsibilities.

The woman owes it to herself and to the child that she may bear, to make very sure that the man with whom she proposes to unite herself is emotionally and not merely physically desirous of her.

The man owes it to the woman and to the child not to seek the satisfaction of mere physical appetite with a woman whose deepest emotions are fixed on him, but whom he cannot love in any real sense.

The child who is born outside marriage will most probably suffer in other ways than merely because his mother will find it difficult to support him.

You may remember how we saw that as a baby you needed two things more than anything else: Security and Love.

Very rarely can a young unmarried girl, or a young unmarried couple, give the child the secure, settled home he needs.

Only too often the baby born outside marriage has only one parent – the mother. She may be a very good mother, devoted to her child, but she can never be two parents however hard she tries.

She will have to scrape and manage along to keep and rear her child. She may smother it with love – just as bad as giving it too little. If it is a boy, he will miss the influence and example of a father. In fact he will not have the home background which a child needs for full development.

When he grows up, however nice most people may be, the child may be made to suffer very greatly when he finds out that he is not a 'legitimate' child.

Of course it is cruel and wrong to blame a child for whatever his parents may have done. But children hate to be made to feel 'different' – as you must remember from your own childhood – even if the 'difference' is something quite trivial. Unless, of course, they can feel a bit superior, but that would not be so in a case like this, would it?

Then what about sexual experience between young people with precautions taken to make sure there is no child?

The answer is that there is no means within the reach of the ordinary young person which is 100 per cent certain to prevent conception.

If you are married, it will not be such a serious matter if your attempt to prevent conception should by chance fail. You may have wanted to wait a while yet before having a child, but if one should come it will not mean 'the end of the world'. If you are not married, the position will be very different.

So unless you are married, you and your girl will probably spend half your time in misery of mind in case 'something has gone wrong'.

That would probably mean, in the end, that you would become nervy and irritable with each other. You would perhaps start to quarrel, without knowing the real reason – which would be the hidden fear in your minds. So you might come to the end of your love affair, for there is nothing like worries of that kind to come between people.

If this should happen, both boy and girl will be left with the sense that something very beautiful has been destroyed – especially the girl, who may be left with a deep mark of bitterness and regret at having given up her virginity for nothing in the end.

The dangers of casual 'affairs'

So far I have dealt with the situation where two young people are in love. I know very well, however, that especially in the case of young men, there may sometimes arise temptations which have more to do with a sudden urgency of sexual need than with love itself.

So I think it would be as well here to say that unless you take good care in your choice of a partner, careless sexual relations can lead, for both man and woman, to infection with disease.

This is not likely to happen where your partner is someone you know to be clean-living. But when a man 'picks up' a rather fast girl, or a girl lets herself be seduced by a casual acquaintance from street or dance-hall, he or she does run a very real risk.

There are two main classes of disease which affect the reproductive organs. One, gonorrhoea, is unpleasant and may if not attended to lead to sterility. The other, syphilis, can – unless recognized early and treated in time – maim, disfigure and prove deadly.

They are diseases just like any other disease. Any young person who has taken a foolish risk and suspects that he has been infected must go a doctor however ashamed he may feel at having to admit what he has done.

It is far, far better to be cured in the early stages than to go on without attention, and risk becoming a really sick person and perhaps infecting others – even an innocent wife and child. For syphilis can be hereditary.

I understand very well that there are some people so made that their sexual temptations are stronger than other people's. If they find themselves utterly unable to control their impulses it is well they should know that there are

hygienic measures which can be taken as a precaution against the possibility of infection.

On the whole, however, for most of us, it is far better not to risk any adventure which might have such consequences. Although venereal diseases can be successfully treated if taken in time, it is almost certain that anyone who has been infected will suffer psychological harm from the feelings of guilt and shame which he is likely to experience.

What should you do?

So, you see, in your own best interests, it is best to abstain from casual sexual experience.

In your own interests and that of your partner – and for the sake of a possible child, and therefore of society – it is also wisest to wait for marriage before being united in physical as well as mental and spiritual love.

This being the case, you may well ask why it is that society does not permit you to marry at an earlier age than is usually possible nowadays.

We go back again to the economic reason, which of course is the first practical one. To make a stable home, a young man must first have gained a reasonable income.

But I must say that even if that reason did not hold good, I still do not think it would be wise for young people to rush into marriage the minute their bodies were ready.

You see, sexual development can be completed in a girl by the age of 13, and in a boy of 15 or so. But the character and emotional development still lag behind, because they have not yet seen enough of the world and of people.

They also have not, in almost every case I should say, learned enough yet about themselves or about each other.

This is very important.

Since in human beings sex means more than just physical satisfaction – especially in the woman – you need in your partner the qualities of heart and head which are going to fit in with yours.

Some young people marry early just because they have a violent physical urge towards each other. Then, after they have been married for a while, they find out that they are only happy together when in bed.

In daily life they get on each other's nerves, have habits which annoy each other, different interests, different kinds of friends.

In the end, that destroys the bed-happiness too.

If we were still on the level of the lower animals, we might be able to mate with a person and our opinion of them in daily life might not matter.

But it does matter, and if a couple come to hate the sight of each other in daily life, the natural pleasure of their sexual life will also fly away.

Then they will have nothing left, and heaven help the unfortunate child they may have produced, who will grow up in an atmosphere of continual misery.

Of course, you can have unhappiness in marriage the other way round, too.

Two young people may be drawn together in the first instance because they do share similar interests and have mutual friends. But when they come to marry it may turn out that either or both of them have been wrongly brought up, and have some idea that sexual life is unpleasant or shameful.

Then there will be no happiness in the sexual life, and in the end the couple's affection and friendship will be poisoned by that.

So, you see, the choosing of a life-partner is not an easy job, and should not be undertaken in a hurry.

Give yourself a chance – meet and compare the possible

partners. Use the time during which society makes it impractical for you to marry in making sure that you make a wise choice for when the time comes.

There is therefore something to be said for the social convention and the economic facts which force most of us to wait and take our time before going into marriage.

On the other hand, if two young people meet who fit each other physically and mentally, and have been sensibly educated in how to live, then I agree that early marriage can lay the foundation of a life's happiness.

This, you may say, does not help you for the moment. You cannot marry, it is wise not to take risks by having sexual experience outside marriage – what then are you to do?

There is no harm in a certain amount of love-making. You will be wise, though, not to take it too far. If you do, you may find the impulse in yourself becoming too strong for your self-control.

There is a lot to be said for holding back from full sexual experience before marriage, especially with girls.

For one thing, as you know very well, any lovely thing is all the better for having been waited for. If you can do it, it is better to wait and have a really complete happiness than take little nibbles here and there which will only leave you with a sense of having done wrong – to yourself, as well as your partner.

Girls, especially, will be wise to remember one thing.

However 'advanced' a man's ideas may be, however broad-minded he genuinely is – as distinct from just 'doing a line' to get you to agree to do something he wants – every man does in his heart wish that his wife shall be untouched.

He may say otherwise. He may genuinely believe that he would not hold a girl's past against her. If she has a past, and he really loves her, he will put up with it. But in his

most secret heart, the thought that his wife has belonged only to him is something very sacred to any man.

So why throw away something you will never have back to give again, if the 'right one' should not after all be your present first love, but someone waiting for you in the future?

However strong the desire is in you to find out what sexual experience is like, or to express your love for the boy or girl you have just chosen, wait.

Give your character development time to catch up with your physical development. Give yourself a chance to meet more people. The person who seems right for you to-day may not be right for you to-morrow, when you have developed further. You will not want to leave behind you the deep bitterness of your broken promises.

Get to understand the way other people's minds work, and keep a check on the working of your own.

Try to understand that although it may seem very hard on you that you should be asked to delay the exercise of your sexual powers for the time being, that is a price you pay as a good citizen for the harmony of our social life.

We all have to compromise with our feelings and instincts for the good of the society in which we live. We cannot make messes wherever we might feel like it. We cannot take things we may covet. If we did, social life would be chaos.

For similar reasons, the young person is asked to pay the price of restraint in order that social life may remain orderly, and in order that he shall not risk doing deep harm to others.

The exercise of control will do you no harm, and you will give time for your character and emotions to catch up on your sexual development.

Then, in a few years' time, you will be in a better position to start married life together with the one you love now, or to see that your first was not your best choice, and to make another.

CHAPTER XXIV

The world and you: Your immediate future – *Choosing and getting your first job:* Where and how to start – *Is it enough to be efficient?:* Making practical use of psychology – *Early working life:* How to succeed in work and social contacts

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The world and you

You are at a turning-point of your life, or a starting-point, if you like – about to take your place as a member of adult society.

What is your immediate future to be?

It is natural for you to want to stand on your own two feet and be independent, expressing yourself individually in work and leisure as your parents do.

If they are wise, your parents, having given you the love and security you needed in childhood, will now crown their care for you by helping you towards this new goal.

Probably the chance to earn your own living has become to you the symbol of the independence to which you are looking forward. It will give you a splendid feeling of increased self-respect – and it is an adventure.

I wonder if you have recently sat down and tried to work out quietly for yourself what you want the next few years to be like.

What sort of work are you going to do? What is your object in taking it up? How do you wish to live outside your working hours?

Conditions have changed very greatly in the last few years. Even the educational system has made, and is making, considerable advances.

Very many young people, after struggling through scholarships, found themselves in the 1930s ill-equipped to earn their own living because they had been taught academic and not practical subjects.

This may still apply to some schools. In general, however, it is becoming more usual to give young people the opportunity not only of classical education but also of practical education if that is best suited to their temperament and circumstances.

Some years ago there was a great deal of unemployment. To-day, because of changed conditions, there is no reason to fear unemployment if you give reasonable application to your work.

This is important for young people to-day. Before the war, you might have been forced, for the sake of earning a living, to take up a 'blind alley' job which in the end would get you nowhere.

It was then no uncommon thing for young people to be taken on as delivery boys, messengers, office-boys or so-called 'trainees' in industry – only to find themselves sacked in a few years when they asked for a man's wages.

To-day the shortage of labour makes this unlikely to happen.

Yet this in itself has its own danger.

If you know that your job is reasonably safe you may – if you are shortsighted – succumb to the temptation just to drift along on routine lines without making any effort to better yourself.

This would be foolish, for who knows what responsibilities you may want to take on in a few years' time?

Nor responsibilities only. Why should you not build up for yourself the opportunity of a good life – with comfortable home, reasonable pleasures and the chance to travel a little and see something of the world?

So when you come to choose your first job – having made

up your mind what kind of work you want to do – give the matter some real thought.

Choosing and getting your first job

What should you get out of work, and what should you put into it?

Your working life will occupy so great a part of your time that it would be barren indeed if you tied yourself up to something you actively disliked, or with which you were likely to become discontented after a time. You should therefore make careful choice.

On the other hand, since you will never get anything for nothing, once you have made your choice you should bring the same enthusiasm to your work as to all your other activities.

That is only fair as well as best for you in the end.

I think that for your own sake, it is wise to look upon your proposed work from two points of view.

1. It is a means to an end – the means, that is to say, by which you will support yourself, and in time gain the position in life you hope to enjoy.
2. It is an end in itself – something which, in the doing, should give satisfaction, and help to develop your natural capacity, in whichever direction it lies.

With no experience, you may have to begin as an office-boy. Why not? Very talented and successful men have begun in that way.

But you do not want to be just *any* office-boy. Nor, if you choose work other than clerical work, do you want to start just anywhere on the bottom rung of your particular ladder.

It may not seem to you at the moment very important where exactly you start, so long as you do get started and

bring home a little money every week. But this is a mistake.

It is far better to choose a really suitable opportunity from the beginning. This may seem obvious to some of you; but surprisingly enough many young people in their eagerness to start overlook the necessity.

If you want to be a journalist, why start as office-boy in a manufacturing concern? Try instead to find yourself an opening in a newspaper or publishing office.

If you are scientifically inclined, pester the chemical works and laboratories, even the testing and research departments of such places as food-processing businesses.

If you want to be a farmer, start in a humble position on the land, not as a grocer's boy.

Anything to get started *in the right direction.*

You may not want to spend all your working life in the one firm – indeed, a little wider experience of different methods of work and with different colleagues can be a very good thing. So long as you have begun in the trade or profession which interests you – begun however humbly – you will be on the right road and will have good experience to back you when you want to make a change.

You will perhaps have some argument with your elders as to what you should do.

It is worth while listening to them with good humour, even where you feel they are wrong. You may be able to learn something from their experience of business and life.

Where the elders concerned are your own parents, do not be impatient with them. They are sincerely anxious for your welfare, and since they have looked after you for so many years they do not want you to make a mistake now.

If you have no strong views on what you want to do, I should on the whole be inclined to take their advice.

On the other hand, there is absolutely no reason why you should be coerced into an occupation in which you know you will not be happy, just because your father or

mother wants you to fulfil their own private ambitions. It is your life, not theirs.

Still, even if this is the case, listen to them with courtesy and at any rate consider their advice. They have your interests at heart, though it is only you who can decide where you are likely to be most happy and useful.

If you know what you want to do, and have the opportunity of doing it, do not be dissuaded by the opinions and wishes of other people. But in your manner of rejecting their advice show tact and consideration. It is very easy to hurt the feelings of parents who care for you, by rudeness which later on you will regret.

There are many people and institutions which will give you advice in getting the start you want, or in finding out – if you are not decided – for what kind of work you would be most fitted by temperament and ability.

The Institute of Industrial Psychology exists to find out which are the 'round' and 'square pegs', and which their appropriate holes. Citizens' Advice Bureaux and the Employment Exchanges are nowadays staffed by human, understanding people with experience of life, who may be in a position to help you.

Many educational authorities, with which your headmaster will put you in touch, have bureaux to which you can apply for information on suitable vacancies. Your local Minister of Religion will also be ready to help you.

If, however, nothing suitable comes through these channels, do not be discouraged and think you have got to take something about which you are doubtful. Very often the best opportunities are those which we make for ourselves.

You have a local library, with a reference department attached to it. There you will find trade journals, and in their advertisement columns you can start your own hunt for the kind of opportunities you want.

Do not be backward in asking the help of anyone you

may know who is engaged in the profession which interests you. People love to be asked for advice. It makes them feel good to be able to help. So do not be shy in asking.

On the other hand, you must use tact – not worry, nor ask any particular favour on account of friendship as if you could not stand on your own feet.

A similar tact and sense of fitness is needed both in writing letters seeking employment and in your first interview with a prospective employer.

Letters of application should state the essential facts simply and concisely: age, education, scholastic attainments and special interest. Plainly written, careful paragraphed, such a letter will be important as an introduction.

You may find your first interview somewhat difficult to handle – especially if your experience has so far been limited to summonses to the headmaster's study for pleasant, or not so pleasant, little talks!

Nervousness may tend to make you talk too much, or too little. You will be most natural, and therefore most at ease, if you forget yourself in concentrating upon the person with whom you are talking.

There is no need to compensate for your nervousness by being either too humble or too bumptious. So long as you give the impression of being mentally alert and willing to give good service, you will do well.

Listen carefully to what is said. Answer concisely when necessary. *Put yourself in the other person's place*, and give him the information you understand he will need.

Is it enough to be efficient?

Now I want to digress here for a moment, to discuss a point which will be of tremendous importance both at the beginning, and throughout your business life.

It is not enough to have ability and education. It is not even enough to be efficient in your special subject – unless your character development is on an equal plane.

A brilliant person who is erratic, and gives only fitful attention to his work, is less useful in the end than one less gifted who is dependable.

An efficient worker who cannot be bothered to understand other people and make allowance for their human feelings is equally undesirable.

You will remember that in the last section I mentioned the fact that people love to be asked for advice. I also remarked that the best way to handle your first interview is to put yourself in the place of the person interviewing you.

Later on I shall point out the need to keep harmonious relations with your colleagues at work.

Now what all these things come down to is this: that you need to apply to life – working and social life – the knowledge of *psychology* that I hope you will have learned mainly from your own life, and perhaps also a little from the second part of this book.

If you have begun to look into your own mind and understand the working of your own thoughts and feelings, you will have gained better understanding of other people's.

Generally speaking, human thoughts and feelings work along the same lines. Even the person you dislike the most, and who seems the most disagreeable, thinks and reacts in very much the same way that you do.

Think of this next time you are in contact with someone you really dislike.

Have you shown that dislike, and has it made that person dislike you? Perhaps if you showed some forbearance and tact, and looked for something to like in him – for even the worst of us has his virtues – then perhaps he would like you too, and you would begin to find common ground for understanding.

It is very much like the story of mutual suspicions between nations, you see!

If you can apply your knowledge of psychology to your private and working life, it will bring two rewards:

1. You will be more charitable and understanding to other people, and they in their turn will react with greater understanding of you.
2. You will find that this will lead to positive success, in business and personal life. If your attention is concentrated *outside* yourself: upon your work, your hobbies, and above all upon the needs and reactions of others, you will inspire confidence and new opportunities will always be coming your way.

Early working life

A new job is not always fun, especially if the job is your first.

It is fun, of course, in the sense that it is a new experience, and you are seeing for the first time a world very different from anything you have seen so far. But, especially if you now find yourself a very small cog in a very big business machine, it can be rather frightening.

You may find the change from being a rather important senior at school, to being an apparently unimportant junior at work rather disturbing. Naturally, it may be difficult to make that adjustment at first.

Remember, though, that all adjustments which have to be made suddenly are likely to be rather difficult in the beginning. Since all life is a process of adjustment, it is well to get yourself used to it.

As a small child, you woke up to the fact that you were part of a family. Later, you had to learn to fit in to the

world of school. Now you have taken one more step forward – that is all.

As you go on, many things which seemed big and important at the time will take their right proportion in your life. Your wider growth makes the past smaller in comparison. That is nothing which should upset you. Only something to learn from.

So you have to adjust yourself to the new situation, remembering that as a beginner you have to learn, and if necessary take rebuke or instruction in a sporting way.

That does not mean that you have to be humble or subservient, or degenerate into that horrible person, the office or works 'sneak' – any more than at school.

If you have made a mistake, never be afraid to admit it. Take the blame. There is no successful man who has not made mistakes in his past, and even gone on making them from time to time. So long as you learn from them and do not repeat them you will have gone forward, not back.

Nor should you feel any embarrassment in apologizing for an error. People will think much more of you if you are frank about it, and sincerely sorry. Not to apologize when you are wrong shows a mean spirit, and one which will antagonize others.

Your life at this stage really falls into three sections. There is your relationship to the work; your relationship to your employers and colleagues; and, of course, of very great importance, your background of home and leisure.

Each of these will react upon the others.

If you are not completely at ease in your working life, home life will suffer because of the irritations carried back at the end of the day. If something is wrong with home life, you will find yourself unable to give sufficient concentration to working hours.

You may get fed up with the humble and humdrum jobs which are likely to be your lot when you first start work.

But you have to start at the bottom. How else will you get the experience necessary to rise? How else can your seniors have a chance to assess your capacity?

Have patience. As a baby you had to learn to walk. So, now, you are learning to walk in this new path – and will have to go on learning throughout life.

If you do humdrum jobs conscientiously, you will prove your fitness for greater responsibility. At the same time, there is no reason to limit your interest in the business only to those small tasks.

You will have the opportunity, if you keep your eyes and ears open, to learn something of the business as a whole – the way it works, the interaction of the various departments, the trades and industries with which it may be interconnected.

If, while you carry out your own small duties, you acquaint yourself with the larger plan of what is going on around you, you will be equipped when opportunity comes to take on a more responsible position.

You want to try to gain an understanding of the trade as a whole. It will be necessary if you rise in your present firm. And if ever you should wish to transfer to another you will have learned the most suitable place to look for a new and better opening.

Although these last few pages have been phrased in a way most applicable to office life, yet the principle remains the same wherever your path may lie – on the land, in industry or in social service.

The other half of your working life is in personal relationships. As we saw in the previous section, this is very important indeed. It will affect both your own development as a person and also the harmonious running of the business of which you are a part.

In private life, generally speaking, if you do not like an individual there is no need to meet him. In business life

you will probably be forced not only to meet him but to be in close contact every day. Therefore you have from the start to decide what kind of attitude you will take up.

If people working together dislike each other, it not only affects them, but also their efficiency in their work. It is, once again, like the body, which cannot function properly if its parts are fighting against each other.

Once more, be yourself – your best self, that is – applying your knowledge of psychology so that you understand how other people think and feel, thinking rather of them and what interests them than of the impression you may be making on them.

It is not hypocrisy to restrain yourself from argument, or to conceal dislike and annoyance. Like the white 'social lie', such civilized behaviour is necessary in the interests of the community, or business, of which you are part.

It will benefit you, too, both in preventing you to develop tolerance and understanding, and in preventing unnecessary barriers being built up between you and other people.

That does not mean that you should, in business as in school, toady to anyone because for the time being they are 'over' you. It certainly does not mean, either, that you should show a smiling face to a workmate and run him down behind his back.

But it is worth while showing tact in dealing with other people, and trying to understand why they are as they are.

It will help your own self-training. It will get you further in the end both in the material as well as the spiritual sense – for if the atmosphere of an office or workshop is tense with personal dislikes and rivalries the work will not be done well. Senior officials very rightly take a poor view of people who become known as trouble-makers.

Emphatically, I do not mean by this to imply that you should 'play up to' your employer or senior colleagues.

Nor that you should content yourself with a humdrum job and a subordinate position all your life.

There is, however, much to be said for accepting humble beginnings with everything that implies, in order to train yourself for future responsibility.

If you have seriously taken some trouble to control in yourself your own more petty reactions, it may later amaze you very much to find out how many people – who might have got very much further but for this omission – have not learned to do so.

Sometimes in a works or office there will be rivalries and jealousies which have resulted in quite long-established opposing 'cliques' among the staff. They can cripple the working of a good business, by putting such personal issues before the common interest.

Steer clear of such groupings, and do not be drawn into any of them.

It will require something like superhuman tact on your part to remain on good terms with both sides. At first they will both suspect you of double-dealing. But in the end they will respect an honest and courageous stand.

Finally, remember that all mankind has a common ancestry. The same impulses are latent in us all. If Nature appears to have been specially kind to you, endowing you with ability in work and understanding in social contacts, then – count your blessings.

This realization should make you more humble and understanding, not more arrogant and intolerant. Otherwise, you are throwing away the very gifts you are so proud of.

CHAPTER XXV

Settling down: Gaining a wider outlook – *Good manners:* Their use and practice – *The first love affair:* Do not swallow the loved one whole!; learn from experience

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Settling down

The degree to which you will be able to settle down happily both in your work, and in the wider contacts of adult life, will to a very large degree depend upon home background and training.

England is geographically small, and on the whole the life led by all its people is much the same in these days when all have worries as well as opportunities of enjoyment.

Yet it is a striking thing that there remain certain strong barriers of class.

By this I do not mean snobbishness – though you may meet that, of course. That in itself is something so 'little' that it is not worth treating other than with contempt.

Outlooks on life, and ways of living, do, however, vary quite a lot according to the income and habits of the family.

This is often difficult for the young person, since to-day it is quite usual to find him – owing to better opportunities of education – making his way into the business or professional classes, to which his parents do not belong.

No one worth his salt will be ashamed of a home background which is merely poor in material things. On the contrary, you may have great reason to be proud of your parents, because it is in large measure their sacrifice and devotion which has given you the opportunity to go further than they themselves.

It is, however, a mistake to refuse to learn when you are introduced into wider circles.

There are actually some people who believe that it does not matter whether your manners are bad, so long as you have ability. Some take it even further – reacting against merely snobbish points of view – and console themselves with the idea that *if* your manners are bad it proves superiority of mind over mere convention.

To my mind, that is rather like the would-be artist of limited talent, who has to compensate for his failures by telling himself he is a misunderstood genius – and demonstrate it to the world by going about unwashed and unshaven.

Certainly, there have been one or two people of outstanding talent who have been noted for uncivilized behaviour – but the reverse does not hold good. Uncivilized behaviour is not proof of talent!

Moreover, great as the contribution to any one art such a person's work might be, I still cannot help feeling that that artist would have been very much greater as an all-round human being if he had spared some attention for the small graces that sweeten everyday life.

You may have been lucky, in having been born into circles where 'good manners' are current. In that case, you will have learned quite naturally by imitation to meet strangers without embarrassment and to go through life without making social errors.

If that is the case, regard yourself as fortunate, and do not take credit to yourself for something which is the result of better opportunity, when you see others fail in this particular way.

It is, however, quite possible that your home sphere is small. Especially if you come from a town suburb, you may not have had much opportunity of meeting others and learning how to hold your own with them.

Good manners

Real good manners are not so much a matter of convention as of grace.

True, there are certain small niceties of everyday behaviour which are regulated by convention – table manners, for instance. If you are not quite sure what to do if faced with a battery of knives and forks at a big dinner, it is best for your own sake to know the general usage. Otherwise you may be put off by a feeling of being at a disadvantage which will prevent you doing yourself justice in conversation with your neighbours.

On the whole, however, apart from these things – on which you need not be ashamed to seek advice from others more experienced – good manners are a matter of consideration for others.

You may think that throughout this book very great emphasis has been laid on your need to look into your own mind and heart, and understand their workings so that you shall be able to control them.

That does not mean, however, that the desired result should be a self-centred and introspective person.

Analyse your thoughts and feelings, by all means. But the object in doing so should be twofold:

1. To give you greater self-control, so that you may correct the less pleasant tendencies of your character.
2. To give you greater understanding of others.

Both aims are important, but the first is in a sense only a step to the second.

The self-analysis should come, in time, to be almost an unconscious process. It is the understanding of others which

should always go on, consciously, so that your attention is centred on them, not yourself.

Opening doors for the very old, assisting them into buses and trams, may seem small things – but they do show an awareness of other people and a consideration of their comfort which is an index to the whole character.

Such little thoughtfulnesses are greatly appreciated, and bring their own reward in raising other people's estimation of you. Not that that should be a motive – but it does happen that way.

Nothing for nothing is the rule of life; and where consideration is given, new affection will be found.

There is no reason, if you have been handicapped by a poor start in life, to be afraid that you will not learn to meet people easily and to make them like you.

Train yourself to forget yourself, concentrating upon your companion instead. There is nothing, for instance, so dull as a dinner companion who never utters a word. True, an empty chatterbox is not much better, nor a bore who will persist endlessly in talking about his own pet subject even if it is not yours.

The ideal companion – and the one who will leave behind him a good impression – is the person who is able to listen intelligently to the other's views or ideas, and to show interest even if the subject is not one with which he is greatly concerned.

That does not mean pretending to knowledge that you have not got. It is always much better, if you are ignorant of a matter, to say so straight out – rather than make a pretence and then find that your ignorance has betrayed you after all.

In such a case, ask your companion to explain. He will love being asked for advice or information; you will learn something too – so both will be satisfied.

Of course you will frequently meet people with views very

different from your own. So long as you can discuss them reasonably and without getting heated, that is quite all right.

A clash of ideas can be a very stimulating and productive thing.

What is not, however, and can lead to real bitterness and misunderstanding, is when you get dogmatic about something and refuse to let the other fellow have beliefs different from your own.

It is not clever to make violent attacks upon another person's strongly and sincerely held religious, political or moral principles. It is simply boorish.

He has as much right to his opinion as you to yours – and although it may seem to you that he is being unutterably stupid, you will be doing no service to him, to yourself or to your own views by trying to push them down his neck.

This is another matter which really boils down to having consideration for others. Why hurt them, as hurt them you will, by attacking things sacred to them? You can put your point of view sanely and reasonably without doing that.

Often this kind of wish to change other people's views comes from a sort of spiritual desire to possess others.

You will meet quite a lot of that – people who think it is their business to 'save others' souls', or run their lives for them.

It is no one's business to try to run someone else's life, or to try to change them in any way. You have got quite enough to do to run your own life, and change yourself for the better so far as you can.

If your example is worth anything, it will be far more powerful in influencing others than any mere words.

The first love affair

This question of 'good manners', both practical and spiritual, will overlap very closely with your first friendships and love affairs.

Some self-centred young people ruin all chance of happy human relationships because all the time their unconscious, if not their conscious attitude, is what they themselves want to get out of it.

That is no basis for friendship, none for love, and above all none for marriage when that comes later.

Even in closest friendship or love, there must be two distinct spheres: the intimacy, or 'fusing', of two personalities, and the separateness of each individual existing as an individual.

Young people sometimes mismanage their first love affair, and get themselves badly hurt, because they want to swallow the loved one whole.

This is a danger against which young women especially should guard themselves. It arises in them quite naturally from the fact that their whole emotional being is deeply concerned with their love-life; more so, for Nature's own reason, than is a man's.

There is nothing more likely to make a man run a mile in the other direction than the hint of such 'swallowing-whole'.

What the woman is tempted to do in emotional ways, the man is often tempted to do in intellectual ways – imagining that because his may be the most active part in their joint life, the 'little woman' has therefore got to take his word as law in matters on which she is perfectly able and entitled to come to her own conclusions.

There must be give and take in these matters; and there must be a sense of humour, too.

Try if you can, also, to bring the sense of humour to bear when you have your first heart-break in love, as almost inevitably you will.

I know that this can be the bitterest pain for a young man or woman, when it seems that the world has come to an end. Yet, though it is a hard saying for you at the moment, it will pass.

Time does heal. Nor would it be any good putting the clock back even if we could, to the times we were happy with our first choice.

The temperamental differences which led to your parting would only lead to parting again. The fact that you have parted is sure enough evidence that you were not right for each other.

It may have been your fault. It may have been the other person's. It may well have been both.

It can be an occasion for you to look into yourself and find out where you failed, so that you do better in future. It can also be the moment to examine dispassionately what it was in your partner that did not suit you, so that you do not make the same error of choice again – a thing we are all tempted to do, for reasons I examined in the chapter on school friendships.

The experience gained through your first failure in love should leave you enriched, not impoverished, if you are willing to learn from it.

As I have said earlier, it may not be at all a bad thing in the long run that society makes it difficult for us to marry as soon as we are physically ready for love.

We have still got far to go in meeting and understanding people before we can make a good final choice, which will give us the chance of an enduring and happy marriage.

CHAPTER XXVI

Your ultimate future: Success in business, marriage and parenthood – *God and you:* The purpose of life, and your part in it

—

Your ultimate future

So we reach, as it were, the horizon of your present outlook: the life you hope to make for yourself in the future, of which you are now laying the foundations.

Let the foundations be good. There is so much to be built on them.

What are your aims?

From my point of view, I should say that they might be summarized in the desire to develop your powers fully in every respect: body, mind and spirit finding fulfilment in work, leisure, marriage, and parenthood.

Do not set your ambitions so high that with your endowment in environment and personality they are too exalted. It would be absurd to hanker after an impossible fulfilment, when you might find contentment in doing just as much as, and maybe a little bit more than, is reasonably possible in your present circumstances.

If you have laid a good foundation to your business life, if you bring to it an intention to do your best – together with understanding of the human beings with whom you will have to work – then nothing except unpredictable accident can prevent your making a moderate success.

Do not regard financial reward as the only object.

Certainly, you should have the opportunity not only of making a bare existence, but also of gracing it with comfort and beauty. Travel, and a wide circle of friends, will

help you to continue at all ages your development as a full human being.

Your work should bring with it gains other than material rewards. If you have made a wise choice, there will be the satisfaction of achievement and of full use of your potential powers.

When the time comes for you to marry, I hope it will not be simply on the basis of physical attraction.

If you have trained yourself to understand yourself, and to observe and understand other people, you will make a choice of partner which will give you a chance to make a marriage which will endure even when the first rapture of sexual experience has passed.

For this you need interests in common, and common ideals.

There may come a time when your partner and yourself seem in danger of losing touch with each other. If this should happen, do not take the easy way of blaming everything on to him or her.

It is very seldom in marriage difficulties that the fault lies all on one side.

You may have come to take your partner too much for granted. You may have undermined his or her self-confidence, and threatened the basis of your relationship to each other by thoughtless unkindness and criticisim.

In marriage, good manners in the sense of consideration for the other person is a matter of primary importance.

Anyone who behaves well in public and boorishly at home is a whited sepulchre, with corruption inside.

Unless you are ready to regard marriage as an enduring thing, you ought not to enter it. It will have its difficult times, as well as the lovely ones – because you are both human beings, with failings.

Are you so wonderful that you cannot be asked to bear with other people's shortcomings?

Having once married, you should do your best to continue the understanding in which marriage began. It will need adjustment and adaptation from both of you – just as growing up needed adjustment and adaptation at every stage; just as the evolution of life itself needed the same.

Especially if there are children, you will have to learn to put the interests of the home as a unit before your personal wishes. Where misunderstanding between partners has become really chronic, it can warp the lives of the children, and give them a feeling of insecurity which may cause lasting damage.

A mother will usually sacrifice herself without thought for the sake of her child's life and material well-being. Often, through ignorance, she does not realize that this may be necessary in other directions too.

Both parents, when disagreements arise, as they inevitably will from time to time, should take care to see that they are not allowed to embitter the atmosphere of the home and cause the child psychic damage.

Why, in any case – children or no children – should disagreements between man and wife have to deteriorate to a jungle level? If there cannot be give and take – or in the case of argument, then argument on a reasonable and civilized level – what hope is there of any sort of peace, either in the home or in the world at large?

When you find yourself in the position of parent instead of child, I hope you will remember to avoid any mistakes which may have been made by your own parents.

You do not want to continue into yet another generation the disadvantages which may have descended to you. A parent who was thwarted in childhood, and then proceeds to make his own child's life a misery in a similar way, has learned nothing. He is taking a primitive revenge, continuing the 'bruise' which was made in him.

Above all, remember that your children are not *yours* in the sense of being possessions. Just as you found out for yourself that you belonged to yourself as an individual so will your children make a similar discovery.

No human being has the right to try to 'possess' another. No parent should try to clip the wings of his child.

This is a temptation to which mothers are especially prone. It is very natural that it should be so, since for so many years they have devoted their love and care to the child.

But the mother who in her old age will be most loved and honoured is not the one who, through too anxious love and care, has tried to keep her child to herself and prevent him living his own life.

The truly successful mothers, and fathers too, are those who, having given practical and spiritual care in the early years, are prepared when the time comes to let their child take his own way and make his own life.

God and you

What lies behind this complex pattern of human life, in which the individual is at once alone and a necessary part of bigger unities?

Perhaps we cannot know the ultimate answer.

If you have a deep religious faith, which provides for you the answer to such a question, you may have a sound basis for your way of living. Stick to it, and do not let anyone maliciously upset that faith.

On the other hand, if other people's views are different, try to be tolerant and understanding, realizing that they are equally entitled to their opinion however little you may be able to accept it.

If, however, you are unable to find in any one religious

creed a fully satisfying answer to the problems of life, do not feel that you are all at sea without a pole star to guide you.

If you care to look for it, you will find that star in yourself – in that inner conviction of right and wrong born in you as conscience.

It may be that you cannot accept as God what seems to you something far away, or a figment of superstitious imagination.

Does that necessarily mean that you cannot accept that there is such a thing as God?

The whole trend of the evolution of life points to a unity between all things. Nature is one, and throughout Nature there exists a harmony and balance.

If we can do nothing more, we can at least each try to observe the same unity, harmony and balance in our own lives.

Any action which is mean and little, or which wrongs another human being, is an offence against the unity of life. It is an offence against another who has equal right with you to life. It is also an offence against yourself – for every time you do something which harms another, you harm yourself, by allowing yourself to develop in a wrong direction.

Habit is very powerful. Persons who get into the habit of self-seeking at other people's expense are allowing themselves to become slaves of wrong habit. They end by losing all touch with the unity of life.

So the end of wickedness – that is to say, self-seeking at others' expense – is the destruction of the wrongdoer himself. First in the moral sense. Probably, in the end, in the material sense also – since the wrongdoer, while he may flourish for a time, cannot continue such a career indefinitely without hurting so many people that in the time of his own need he has no one to turn to.

Some intellectuals may question the superficial observances of organized religion. They may feel very sincerely that they cannot accept what seems to them mere superstition.

What no one can get away from is the fact that through all life on earth runs the same pattern – the unity and interdependence of all life. More, that unity and interdependence can be seen to be, not an end in itself, but a means – a means towards ever higher and higher development.

The person who accepts with understanding that he is part of the brotherhood of man – not merely now, but in relation to all life which has gone before us and which will come after us – will have an inner harmony which will enable him to bear the trials which may come his way, and to retain a hold on his ideals.

The embittered and frustrated person is one who has allowed that understanding to escape him; and he is not a fundamentally happy person.

Whether your God is the Trinity or Jehovah; whether you believe in a mediator like the Son, or Gautama Buddha; whether you accept simply the rule of the Good as the principle behind Nature's order – whatever your belief, if you serve it and do not betray it, you will know inner peace.

For *we are all members one of another.*

GRAMASEVAKS TRAINING CENTRE
16 APR 1955
T. KALLUPATTI

A Postscript for the Young Reader

I hope you have enjoyed reading this book, and that parts of it at any rate have been interesting.

Although I have done my best to cover all the many questions and problems which may occur in your life at the present time, I expect there is a good deal I have left out.

If you would like to make any suggestions for new sections or chapters which might be included in the book in a later edition, I should be very grateful if you would let me have them, addressed to me, care of Penguin Books Ltd, Bath Road, West Drayton, Middlesex.

If you have any criticisms to make – do not hesitate to let me hear from you. In time I would like to feel that we wrote this book together.

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Dr Eustace Chesser is a medical practitioner and psychologist in London and lectures on psychological subjects and on various aspects of marriage guidance. He was one of the founders of the Society for Sex Education and Guidance, of which he is still the Honorary Secretary. He has published a number of books including *Love Without Fear*, *Marriage and Freedom*, *Unwanted Child*, *Children by Choice*, and *Sexual Behaviour: Normal and Abnormal*. He is joint author of *The Practice of Sex Education*, a guide for parents and teachers, and, with Olive Hawks, of *Life Lies Ahead*. Several of his books have also been published in the United States and European countries. His *Successful Living* will appear shortly as a Penguin Handbook.